

Apache County Range War • Tucson's Model Zoo • Historic Florence

**PORTFOLIO**

An Eagle's View  
of the Beauty  
and Mystery  
of Navajoland

A Back Road  
through Old West  
Cattle Country

# ARIZONA HIGHWAYS

FEBRUARY ■ 1995 ■ \$2.50

## Locked

in the old  
Yuma Territorial Prison  
I'm fighting  
to control my terror.  
I've kicked walls  
and cried.  
I can't breathe.

**I've got to get out.**





## Cover Story

### Life in a Dark Place

The Dark Cell, prisoners called it. They were locked up there when they broke the rules. It is little more than a 15- by 15-foot cave with iron-bound doors that keep the cell in perpetual darkness, except for what little light comes through a small hole in the roof. As many as 14 convicts at a time were confined inside, some for up to 60 days. What could it have been like, our author wondered. Then she found out. **page 4**

## History

### Death in the Afternoon

Sheepmen versus cattlemen fought an all-out war that tore apart 19th-century Apache County. At the Battle of St. Juan's Day, whites clashed with Hispanics who were determined to drive out the newly arrived Anglos. Somehow the story never made the history books. **page 32**

## Culture

### Music, Maestro, Please!

"The performance is electrifying. The audience is ecstatic. And the orchestra, as usual, is in trouble." The problem is attendance: cash flow, financial support. And the root of the problem? It's a basic change in the culture. **page 16**

## Recreation

### Winterfest Dogsledding in Flagstaff

Like dogs? Enjoy races? Then you're sure to appreciate stopping off at the queen of the north country's Winterfest, featuring Siberians and Alaskan huskies who leave no doubt they love to run. **page 36**

## Travel

### Yuma Crossing

The year is 1850. You're time-traveling, visiting the Quartermaster Depot in Yuma. And before the day is out you'll discover the costumes, weaponry, memorabilia, and the personalities of the past from Spanish conquistador to bandit Pearl Hart. **page 38**

## Museums

### A Desert Museum Reinvents the Zoo

David Hancocks, director of the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, is a firm believer in designing zoo enclosures with a careful eye on animal behavior. His design promises a better future for arid-land animals. **page 10**

## Portfolio

### The Land of the Navajos

Through the eyes — and lens — of a pilot-photographer, we witness the beauty and mystery of this place the Navajo people call Diné Bikéyah. **page 20**

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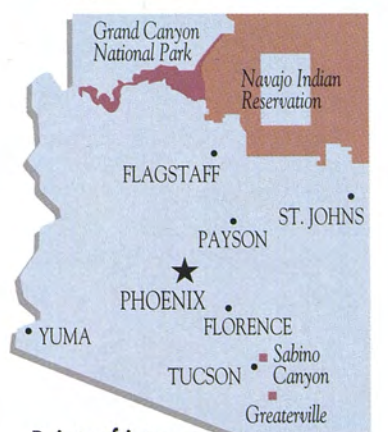
It's just 13.7 miles long on a well-maintained route skimming the northern flank of the Santa Ritas. But it could become an addiction.

### 56 Hike of the Month

Take the Phone Line Trail in Sabino Canyon for a cool mountain water treat.

(ABOVE) A mountain biker exploring Monument Valley admires the sculptured fancies that soar from the otherworldly landscape. DON B. STEVENSON (OPPOSITE PAGE) Performing in the desert outside of Phoenix, Dumitru Lazarescu, a violinist with the Phoenix Symphony Orchestra, hardly seems the type to be involved in what amounts to a "cultural revolution." See story on page 16.

JERRY SIEVE (FRONT COVER) Our author sets out to discover what it was like for prisoners to be locked up in the punishment cell of Yuma's infamous Territorial prison. She quickly finds out she doesn't like it in the dark hole. Not one bit. See story on page 4. JEFF KIDA (BACK COVER) Jim McMullen portrays a frontiersman with a colorful past in a historical re-creation of life at Yuma Crossing in the 1850s. See story on page 38. FRED GRIFFIN



Points of interest featured in this issue

## Drifting and Dreaming: a Boatman's Life for Me

Greg Williams gunned the outboard as the watertight inflatable boat slid into the turbulent grip of the rapids.

I clutched the metal tubing beneath my seat, my eyes riveted to the peak of water that rose, frothing and spewing, just in front of us. The tiny boat dropped into a hole in the water, crashed into a wall of bone-chilling spray, then slid off the side of the great rushing upwelling of water that foamed around an unseen boulder carried to the deep, stony center of the Colorado River by some unimaginable long ago flood in the heart of the Grand Canyon. We began to swirl on the current.

Turning, I glanced at Greg, hoping to read in his expression

whether this plunge into one of the renowned rapids of the Grand Canyon in an inflated cork of a boat was going according to plan.

He was the picture of nonchalance in a life jacket. His hand was draped over the handle of the outboard, and a faint smile played across his face beneath his gray-tinged mustache.

The boat suddenly slid out of the current onto the gentle swirl of the eddy that formed between the rush of the main stream and the back-cut northern bank of the river.

Well into the eddy, he cut the engine. The sound of the river rushed into the silence, a full-throated, hypnotic, and strangely unaccountably upstream, caught in the weary whirlpool of the eddy.

We were, for the moment, merely driftwood. We had cast ourselves on the river with nothing to do but float in circles until the lumbering 40-foot pontoon boat with the rest of our party of fish researchers could catch up.

Greg, driving the sport boat, inevitably charged ahead of the plodding pontoon boat, skimming through the brooding inner Canyon and plunging into the grasping rapids with casual skill.

"So, how many times have you run the river?" I asked, making conversation.

"This is my first trip," he deadpanned.

I happened to know that he'd been a boatman for nearly 20 years, ever since he'd taken a summer job on the river after graduating with degrees in math and physics. I'd watched him wisecrack, charm, and loll his way down the river for a week. He would pull up alongside other boatmen, show a buddy how to use the alternator from the outboard to charge rechargeable batteries, barter candy bars for beer, and note each rapid like an Indy driver counting the curves.

"This is something," I said, hushed into cliché by the lazy swirl of the river and the curiously uplifting weight of those looming cliff faces.

"Yeah," he mumbled. We fell into conversation, as aimless and lazy as an eddy.

Greg fascinated me. He was a complex blend of precision and indolence. He attended to every detail of his raft and equipment, but spent hours sitting like a sun-drunk lizard with his boat tied to a boulder. He absorbed science by osmosis from the researchers he ferried down the river, but relished small talk about outboards. He could fall asleep in a moment, then jump up and zigzag through the center of the toughest rapid on the river. I was caught somewhere between envy and judgment. I had always wished I could live in the moment like Greg, but instead have filled my life with schedules, and titles, and hurdles. One of the

researchers told me Greg's father was a renowned professor of engineering who'd written a widely used text.

The information nagged at me. What would such a father say to a son who earned degrees in physics and mathematics and then spent the next 20 years shuttling tourists down the Colorado River, sleeping mostly under the stars, never ashore long enough for children or ambition or money, caught in a cycle as absorbing and closed as the breath-in, breath-out of the tide?

"I heard you are a physicist," I said.

He cocked his head at me, that half-mocking smile broadening once again.

"Don't get much chance to use physics out here," I continued.

"I use it every day," he grinned. True enough.

"I heard your dad's some big-deal professor," I continued.

"Yeah, something like that," he said.

"Must have been hard for him to understand why you quit science to be a boatman," I said.

"It was," he mused, the wisecracks suddenly deserting him.

We sat in the boat and watched the ancient canyon walls float past. The sound of the river carressed us.

"But Dad finally took a river trip last spring," Greg continued, uncharacteristically forthcoming.

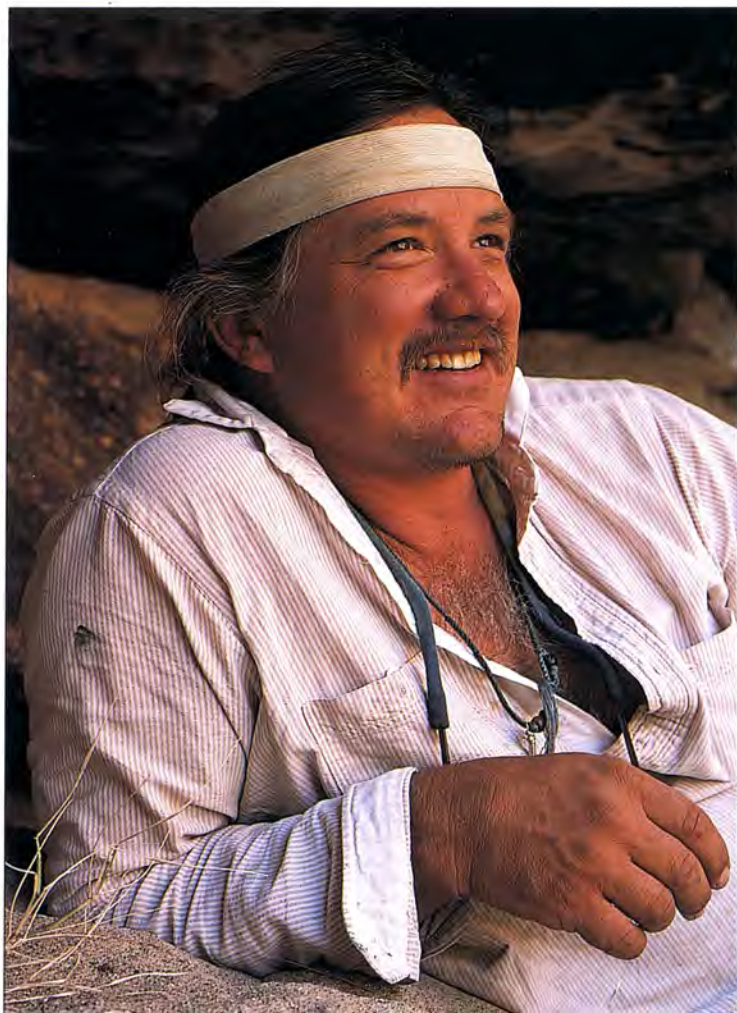
"Did that make a difference?" I asked.

"Yes. Yes, it did," said Greg, looking past me toward where the river slid around the corner between multihued cliffs. "I think he finally understood."

We sat then without speaking, listening to the sound of the water. The pontoon boat caught up some while later. I scarcely noticed.

I was dreaming, wide-eyed, lost somewhere in the green depths. ■

(LEFT) Boatman Greg Williams abandoned the "civilized" world for a life of freedom and wonder on the Colorado River.



## ARIZONA HIGHWAYS

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### DUMBING DOWN

I think you have decided to increase circulation by appealing to a different reader than you used to.

It hasn't been a sudden change; it has been a gradual one — a slow descent to mediocrity, a dumbing down, if you will.

The photographs are still superb, but the articles seem more superficial, less scholarly.

James Tracy  
Arlington, VA

P.S. Drop that awful "Arizona Humor."

### COVER BLURBS

I agree with John W. Filinger's letter ("Cheapening the Covers," October '94). The visual pollution that has been creeping onto your front covers is destroying your long-standing image.

How about a return to quality?

Keith Halliday  
Phoenix

Please don't clutter your beautiful scenic covers with "billboard advertising." Let us discover and enjoy what's inside.

Norma Hartley  
Whittier, CA

I find myself regretting the "advertisements" you feel compelled to use to deface the beautiful photographs on the cover.

Myrth P. Fox  
Cape Coral, FL

Although I don't feel your covers are cheapened by the copy, I think it would be great if you were able to list more of the contents inside instead of on the cover.

Stephanie Doyle  
Willits, CA

I really hate all the print on the cover. This practice is not up to the standard of the rest of the magazine.

Mrs. A.R. McCune  
Slidell, LA

It seems a trifle greedy to decry the print clutter that Mr. Filinger contends "totally ruins" the cover. After all, the back cover and many of the photos inside are clear.

Also, when searching through back issues for an article for present-day use, a quick flip through the covers is helpful.

Robert Crawford  
Oro Valley

If Mr. Filinger doesn't like the covers, why does he subscribe? Your covers make the magazine and set the tone for what's inside.

Your "cluttered covers" catch my attention, and I usually open your magazine before the other mail.

Suzanne Barker  
Omaha, NE

Mr. Filinger is quite correct, you know. We have enough people in Sedona trying to deface our gorgeous landscapes without you having to do it on your cover.

C.O. Miller  
Sedona

Thanks to all who offered an opinion about our covers. Now it's up to the poor editor to figure out what to do.

### WHERE ARE THEY?

What an excellent article about my favorite fruit, the understated and obviously versatile pomegranate (October '94).

Having recently moved to Arizona from Britain, I have tried all the large supermarkets, fruit stands, speciality stores, and numerous farmer's markets, and time and again I am told either, "There's no demand" or "What are they?"

Do other readers have any ideas?

Heidi Potter  
Mesa

### ROCK-CLIMBING

I found the article on Sedona's Red Rock spires (October '94)

colorful and entertaining. But also sad. Sad because I have seen what continual climbing has done to the granite slopes of the Tetons.

Can you imagine what it will do to the soft sandstone material that composes those beautiful spires, especially where the pitons are driven in and then removed?

In my opinion, the Red Rock spires and all of the other formations in Oak Creek Canyon should not be subjected to this abuse.

It has taken Nature thousands of years to create the shapes and colors found in this area, but it will take only a short time to deface and destroy them.

George L. Loveland  
Memphis, TN

### FLOWER PICTURES

In response to Geraldine P. Cramer's letter ("Poor Flower Pictures," September '94), permit an Arizona resident to comment in strong defense of Randy Prentice's beautiful photographs of wildflowers.

Because of the terrain, heat, and lack of moisture, wildflowers grow and prosper where growing conditions are best for them.

Trees shelter them from the intense rays of the sun and the soil is more moist. Even baby saguaros start under trees.


Randy Prentice is an artist in that his compositions show the flowers in their natural environment and relationship to the surrounding landscape.

Dr. Marion B. Barclay  
Tucson

### GREAT PEACHES

The article on Guadalupe (September '94) was a masterpiece with its two-page spread of O. Henry peaches. It confirms my belief that there is no better peach.

Ralph E. Cowen  
Irvine, CA



What's it like  
to spend  
endless time  
**shackled in**  
**chains** in a  
pitch-black cell  
in a primitive  
prison with only  
nameless terrors  
to keep you  
company?  
Here's one  
woman's  
report . . .

# 37 HOURS OF **TERROR** IN THE DARK CELL

Text by Marilyn Taylor  
Photographs by Jeff Kida

**M**y imagination saw the blackness that held me as a living fiend, growing more dangerous by the second. It was a crusher that gained strength as it drained my spirit and stole my oxygen. Lying on my back on a cold flat iron grate, I fought to breathe. Then the stabbing returned, little needle stabs all over the exposed parts of my body. I swiped at them, dreading the vermin I imagined clinging to me.

Blindly groping, I used the cold cave wall to pull myself up. I tried to inhale deeply, but my imagination was on a rampage, and I had become my own enemy. It was time for me to get out of the Dark Cell.

**T**hirty-seven hours earlier, I became the first "prisoner" to be confined in the Yuma Territorial Prison's Dark Cell since the facility closed in 1909. The idea was to make my stay — 48 hours — as close as possible to the experience of prisoners who were thrown into the cell as punishment. They wore only their underwear. I wore shorts, a T-shirt, and sweatshirt. They ate bread and drank water. I also had a loaf of bread and a water jug. They were shackled, so was I.

Going in I was sure I could manage my worst problems: I have to fight for breath in dark spaces, and idle time is a bane on my mind. Otherwise, bugs, snakes, scorpions? Not likely. Ghosts? Hardly. What's 48 hours? A mere two days with a beginning and an end. Time simply had to move along, I reasoned.

Now I'm mortified by my naiveté. I meant the stay as a lark, a writing exercise — let's watch where the imagination goes in darkness. As cavalierly as I approached the confinement, I got what I deserved: an unsettling bout with self-demoralization.

**O**pened in 1876, the Yuma Territorial Prison contained more than 3,000 men and women during its 33-year history. Called the Desert Alcatraz, it claimed the lives of more than 100 prisoners, many of whom lie buried in a cemetery just beyond the prison on a mound overlooking the flowing Colorado River.

The prison's Dark Cell was for inmates who broke the rules. Blasted out of a mountainside and floored with caliche and concrete, it was a 15-foot by 15-foot cave closed off from the outside

**I  
could hear  
them talk  
about  
the Dark Cell  
and how men  
were stuffed  
into  
the cage.**

by two thick strap-iron gates — an outer gate that led to an open walkway and an inner gate that closed off the cell. There were no beds, no pillows, no toilets — nothing but the prisoners themselves. Their only source of air — and light — was a small shaft in the cell's rock ceiling.

For infractions ranging from talking after taps to drinking rotgut, prisoners were either chained and shackled to the Dark Cell's stone walls or thrown into its cage. Constructed in the middle of the Dark Cell, the cage was a grilled strap-iron pen, five feet high, 10 feet long, and eight feet wide. As many as 14 men were locked in it at any given time for periods ranging from four to 60 days.

**C**ertain I could endure a mere two days, I began my Dark Cell stay at 7 A.M. one day in mid-March. Cheryl Steenerson, public information officer for the Arizona State Parks Department, shackled my right ankle, and Joe Masterson, park manager, brought me the bread and water. Locking the gates behind them, they promised to check on me at 5 P.M. that day, 7 A.M. the next morning, and at 5 P.M. the night before my "release."

Since 1961 the prison has operated as an Arizona State Historical Park. Under normal circumstances, Steenerson told me, tours for the prison's hundreds of daily visitors would have included a walk through the Dark Cell. During my stay, she said, the Dark Cell and I would be locked away from sightseers.

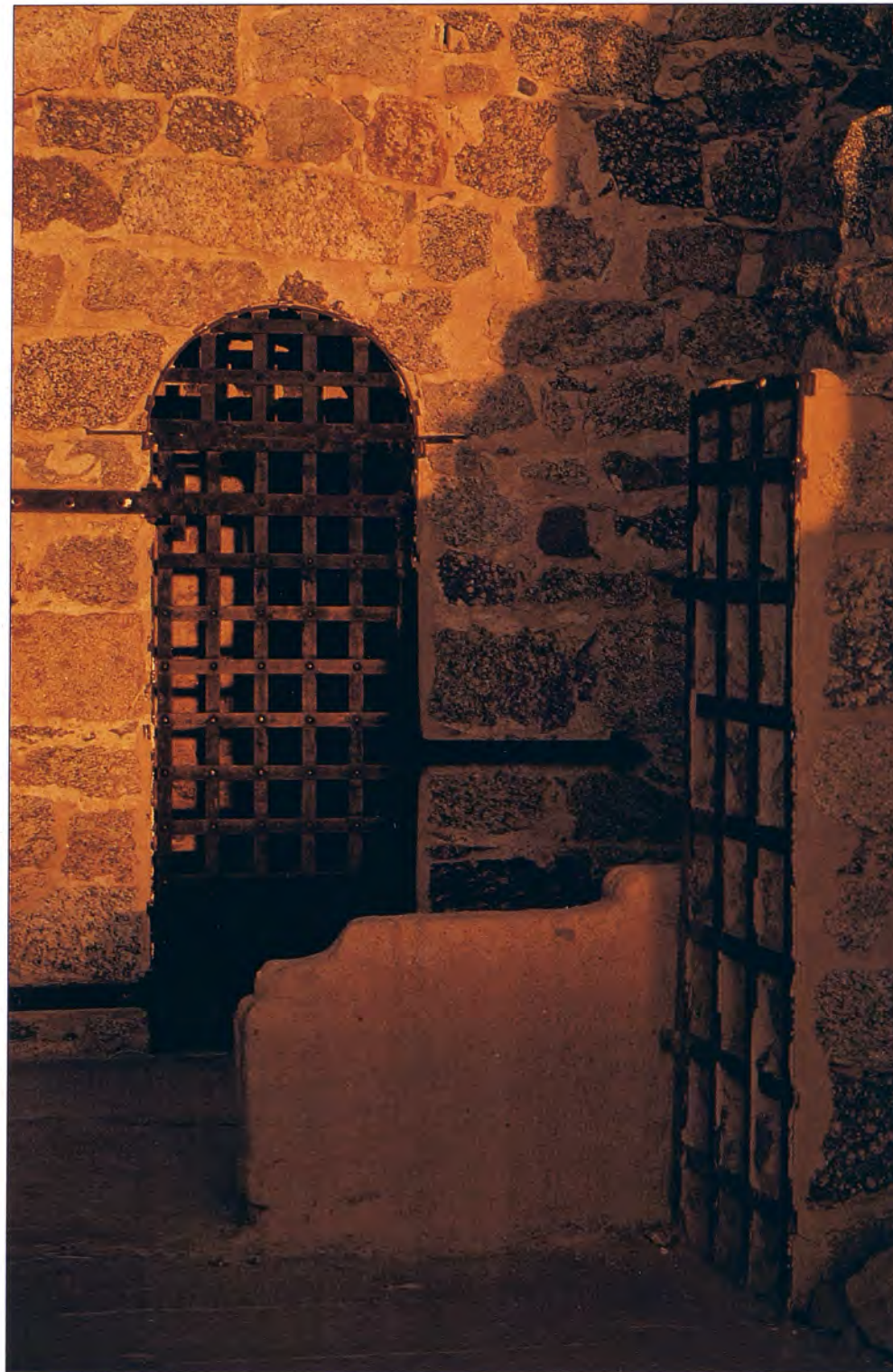
The first hours were easy. As the sun rose higher, the cell was brightened by a beam of bluish light coming through the air shaft, which illuminated an eight-foot by 10-foot floor grate, the only remains of the cage.

As those first daylight hours went by in the cell, which appeared to me as if washed in

(PRECEDING PANEL, PAGES 4 AND 5) For prisoners in the infamous Yuma Territorial Prison, rays of sunlight passing through the bars were a rare comforting sight.

(LEFT) This corridor passes along a row of dank cells. (RIGHT) In an attempt to gain control of her imagination, perhaps by giving herself something else to think about, author Marilyn Taylor lies on the cage's uncomfortable iron floor grate.





(LEFT) Once the cell door shut, prison inmates occupied their time in the best way they could, much like our author, who tried everything from exercising to making mental lists.

(OPPOSITE PAGE) Taylor emerged from the Dark Cell with a new appreciation of what she could, and could not, endure while trying to get a story.

for permission to cross the border into California. Their names and dates are etched into the cave walls, and I read them one by one. Then I took up a stone and carved my own initials, taunting myself all the while with the thought that my initials were a sign to the cave ghosts that my soul now was theirs.

It was then that my imagination began to work against me. It found shadowy shapes on the cave walls and named them. There was Devil Dog with fangs and a snarling, wide-open mouth, and Tragicomic Man, whose lips were twisted in a lunatic's grin while his eyes sagged in despair. I peered up at the ceiling near the cell door and wished I hadn't. It was covered with abandoned spider webs which held wispy skeletons that looked disturbingly like the shells of dead black widows.

At 5 P.M. park manager Masterson came to say good night. The park was closing, she said, and everyone — every single park employee — was going home. She reminded me that I had a police radio in case of an emergency. I nodded, the fear of being completely alone striking me for the first time.

Seated and resting against the wall, I watched the light finally disappear altogether. Soon I could see nothing, not even my own hands before my face. And time had turned cruel; it broke itself into parts: seconds that built slowly to minutes and minutes that crawled to hours and hours that seemed as still as the darkness of the cell.

It was in the darkness that night that I had my first bout with the stabbing sensation on the skin of my legs, arms, and face. By then my body was coated with fine caliche dust which turned my hair to crackling straw. I told myself it was the talclike dust pinching me as it sank into my dry pores.

Despairing that I would spend the black night awake, I took off my T-shirt, gnawed a hole in it with my teeth, and ripped off a wide section. I folded it and, lying down on the cold floor next to the cage grate, placed it under my head.

My mind drifted to what might have become sleep when I was jolted wide awake

by a rumble. A train. As it got closer, the cell vibrated with sound so maddening my brain was beset with a shaky clanging that remained long after the roaring beast had passed.

Now, weary but alert, my imagination renewed its assault by settling on the darkened shaft. The local newspaper in Yuma had published a story about my adventure in advance of the event. Over and over that first night, my imagination saw a jokester jump over the prison wall, climb on top of the Dark Cell, and drop something down the shaft. It wouldn't matter what was dropped. In the darkness, the smallest pebble might as well be a hairy scorpion or a scurrying river rat. Shivering with cold, I waited in torturous tedium the entire night for it. The drop never came, but fear of it robbed my sleep.

When the cell began to brighten, 24 hours had passed, 12 of them in total darkness. At 7 A.M. Masterson returned to check on my water and bread supply. Little of either had been touched. My mood was foul, and my spirits had sunk. I had thought the hardest part of the stay would be the first night, but I was wrong. The 24 hours ahead of me, most of which I would spend alone in darkness, sent me into the deepest, blackest despair.

For endless hours the second day, I walked, ate bread, drank water, walked, lay down, sat down, stood up, sat down, walked, thought, and drifted in and out of minutes of sleep. I prayed for Masterson to come again, signaling that it was 5 P.M., and there would be only 14 more hours until my release. Angry and frustrated by the slow crawl of time, I kicked the cell wall and fought back tears as I waited. Finally I heard her unlock the gate.

"Can I get you anything?" she asked.

"No," I said, biting my lip.

"Well, okay. We'll see you in the morning."

I couldn't believe it. I hated myself. My one chance to leave before the darkness set in, and I didn't take it. I would be alone again with the enemy, myself, in that heavy, horrid blackness.

Then the cell lost its light again, and the stabbing returned. My imagination focused on the nature of ghosts and identified them as invisible demons whose silent chatter drove the living mad. My imagination saw these ghosts still chained inside the cage at the center of the cell. It showed me the frantic flailing arms of trapped men — human beings who had endured as long as two months in this hell — men, reaching out of the cage to stab me and pull me in.

Fighting panic, I lay down on the cage's iron floor grate. Odd as it seems now, I thought this would immunize me against my imagination, that the act itself would

**When  
I stood up,  
I knew  
it was over.  
I couldn't  
breathe.  
The harder  
I tried,  
the faster  
I panted.  
I'd lost  
the power  
to calm  
myself.**



help me reclaim my grip. I lay there on the grate, staring at the darkness. I don't know how long — long enough for the iron bars to force their pattern into my back.

When I stood up, I knew it was over. I couldn't breathe. The harder I tried, the faster I panted. I'd lost the power to calm myself.

Then, just as I was about to reach for the police radio, I heard scuffling outside the cell.

"Who's there?" I yelled. "No one's supposed to be here."

"It's me, Marilyn. It's Jeff." Jeff Kida, the photographer *Arizona Highways* had assigned to the Dark Cell story.

"Jeff, I gotta get out of here!" I yelled. "You gotta find Cheryl Steenerson right now and get me out."

He didn't argue. In a matter of minutes, Cheryl was there, and I was out. It was 8 P.M. I'd been locked up only 37 hours.

In the morning we revisited the cell for a photo shoot, and the park rangers kidded me about letting ghosts drive me out.

"I'll tell you something, though, all joking aside," one ranger said. "Little kids will go into the Dark Cell and come out saying they were pinched. They tell me somebody was in there who reached out and pinched them on their legs and arms. It's weird that it's just the children."

It's not just the children. It's the naive fools, too. They're just as much fodder for hungry spirits and imagination run amuck. ❧

**Scenic Tour:** Join Marilyn Taylor April 5 and 6 when she plays "celebrity host" on a *Friends of Arizona Highways* tour of Yuma's highlights, including the infamous prison, where the "daredevil" author discovered how truly vivid her imagination is. For information, call the Friends' Travel Desk, (602) 271-5904.

*Phoenix-based Marilyn Taylor often writes stories that take advantage of her sense of adventure.*

*On a previous assignment, Jeff Kida photographed author Taylor's search for the monster catfish said to lurk in Roosevelt Lake.*

## WHEN YOU GO

Yuma Territorial Prison State Park is located off Prison Hill Road in the historic district of Yuma, which is in the far southwestern part of the state, 184 miles from Phoenix. The park is open daily (except Christmas), 8 A.M. to 5 P.M. Admission is \$3 for adults; \$2, ages 12 to 17; and free, age 11 and under. For more information, write the park at P.O. Box 10792, Yuma, AZ 85366-8792; or call (602) 783-4771.



moonlight, I plotted a series of activities I engaged in whenever my rear got too sore and my body too cold from sitting or lying on the concrete floor. I marched in place, rattling my chain with each step. I practiced my golf swing, imagining an iron in my hands. I did knee bends and sit-ups. I created lists in my mind and examined them at length: favorite books, favorite cities, favorite movies, milestones in my daughter's life, past boyfriends.

When the park rangers walked by with groups of visitors, I could hear them talk about the Dark Cell and how men were

stuffed into the cage; about cruel guards who may have dropped snakes and scorpions through the air shaft onto prisoners. How would the visitors react if I rattled my chains, I thought. I'd give them a real fright. Later, as the hours crawled by, I actually did it to amuse myself and pass the time.

By late afternoon, the light began to fade, and the cave darkened by the minute. While I still had some light, I inspected the walls.

During the Great Depression, transients and homeless families used the then-abandoned prison for shelter while they waited



*At the  
Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum  
visitors wander along  
specially designed walkways  
to see animal habitats  
so realistic it's like*

# STEPPING INTO THE WILD

**F**or more than 25 years now, David Hancocks, director of the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum near Tucson, has been trying to reinvent the zoo. It goes back to 1968 when, fresh out of architecture school, he sought a job with the London Zoo. "My idea," he recalls, "was to learn how to design around animal behavior, then bring that to human architecture."

He interviewed, was offered the job, and left the office

to tour the zoo. "As a farm kid, I had never been to the zoo," he says, "so I was filled with great excitement and anticipation about seeing elephants, tigers, crocodiles — things I'd never before seen in my life."

The first exhibit stopped Hancocks in his tracks. It was a bare cage with a concrete floor, bars all around, and a heavy plate-glass panel in front. Inside the cage was a solitary gorilla. "I was absolutely shocked," he says. "For 24 years

Text by Tom Dollar    Photographs by Marty Cordano

that gorilla had been confined in that small room with no contact with anything organic except its food and its own feces." The rest of the tour was more of the same. What seemed clear to Hancocks was that in designing zoo enclosures architects had completely disregarded animal behavior.

But his initial disgust was tempered by another emotion: "I was very excited about what could happen if you remembered that in zoos the animal is the client. Everything else should be secondary," Hancocks says.

So he stayed on in the zoo world, challenging zoo orthodoxy from the beginning. He consulted on architecture throughout England and on the Continent, and in 1974 became director of the Woodland Park Zoo in Seattle, a position he held for 10 years. One of the first things he did at Seattle was create a gorilla habitat with 70-foot trees for climbing and big shrubs and bushes for hiding in. It was a first. Predictably some zoo professionals were scornful. Now several major city zoos have copied the idea.

**T**he traditional zoo that many of us grew up with is a product of the late 19th century, a time of great adventurer-naturalists like William Beebe and William Hornaday, and "bring-'em-back-alive" hunters like Frank Buck. Early zoos were parks for showing off large exotic mammals, mainly African, confined to dismal cages or dusty enclosures. Far removed from their native environments, these animals were displayed as virtual freaks: the lion, red in tooth and claw, gnawing on a bloody cow haunch; the gorilla, its strength surpassing that of 20 men, flexing a truck tire as if it were an



accordion. Zookeepers tossed food in through the bars and hosed out animal dung at the end of the day — a veritable slum for animals.

Anyone who questioned this treatment was assured that, in any case, zoo animals were better off "in here" than "out there." Here, at least, they were fed and pampered and cared for when they were sick. Out there it was a jungle.

Nature as I grew up learning about it, was classified, systemized, methodized. The

zoo, a shortened version of zoological garden, was a place to see animals. For plants you went to the botanical gardens in another section of the city. To learn how people fit into the natural scheme of things, you went to yet another separate exhibit hall, the museum of natural history. Life in the sea? Across town at the aquarium. Nature in tidy compartments.

Nowadays anyone who's watched a couple of Nature programs on television can recite a half-dozen things wrong with that picture. Topping the list is the fact that conventional zoos, botanical gardens, and aquariums, display animals, plants, and fish as if they existed isolated from each other. These establishments did not tell stories about the interdependency of living things, stories leading toward a deeper understanding of the natural world.

**T**he preeminence of the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum among zoos has always rested on its innovative approaches to presenting stories about the Sonoran Desert and adjacent habitats. Now, led by David Hancocks, department curators, and other staff, the Desert Museum has come up with a design for the future that goes a long way toward redefining the modern zoo.

The guiding concept for the "new" Desert Museum, which will be 10 years or longer in the making, is to feature communities of plants and animals rather than individual species. Moreover, visitors will experience the illusion of actually being in the habitat rather than looking in from outside. Finally, by the nature of its design and building materials, selection of plants and animals, and the placement of these elements within an exhibit, visitors will be informed by a "story," so to speak, providing a deeper understanding of that particular biome and the functioning of its constituents, including its geology, soils, and weather.

Although museum staff are still tinkering and fine-tuning, and probably will be for some time, one of the master-planned biomes, the Desert Grasslands exhibit, is already finished. A walk through it affords a glimpse at what the Desert Museum is aiming at.

Before entering the Desert Grasslands visitors must pass through the Mountain Habitat, itself one of the newer museum exhibits, having opened in 1986. Part of an earlier master plan drafted in 1980, it too is scheduled for renovation. "We should revisit these long-range plans every few years," says Hancocks.

As you stroll from the mountain habitat into the grasslands, you experience the

succession of natural habitats almost as if you were descending a mountain slope. Dropping away from the mountain environment, you gradually leave behind the Mexican pine-oak woodland typical of midlevel mountain elevations up to about 7,000 feet. Black bears, wolves, raucous thick-billed parrots, Steller's jays, and other woodland creatures exhibited along a mountain-canyon walkway disappear. The murmuring of the tiny mountain stream fades from earshot.

Almost imperceptibly, just as if you were meandering down a mountain trail, you enter high-desert grasslands, typical of elevations of approximately 5,000 feet. Looking up, you see grasses sweeping away toward the horizon. You turn around. The illusion is that you've walked into a desert arroyo. A variety of grama grasses and clumps of bear grass ascend the rolling hillsides beside the walkway. Among larger plants, yucca, ocotillo, and sotol are dominant. Beyond their slender stalks is a vault of blue sky. The effect is magical. How did you get here?



As you walk toward the Grasslands' interpretive ramada, you come to a paleontology diorama where a mammoth tusk, the bones of other prehistoric megafauna, and fossils protrude from the wash bank as if unearthed by recent rainfall. Other dioramas pull you toward the ramada. One shows termites at work in their small adobe-like galleries. Termites remove plant and animal wastes, recycling nutrients and mixing and cultivating soils in the process. They are, we learn, the most important animals, pound for pound, in the grasslands community. Without them the Earth would be covered with animal dung and dead vegetation. Another exhibit shows a cross section of grassland soils, from surface to root level, magnified by 10, 100, and 1,000 times. The importance and function of each layer is explained.

The black-tailed prairie dog colony is the dominant feature within the interpretive

ramada. On sunny mornings, prairie dogs bask and preen on earthen mounds above their burrows. The natural prey of a whole host of animals — eagles, hawks, coyotes, bobcats, foxes, badgers, and rattlesnakes — prairie dogs are wary creatures, standing back to back, keeping a keen eye skyward. Museum prairie dogs, however, tolerate the presence of humans just a few feet away behind thin vertical wire strands. A cutaway shows the tunnel layout of a typical prairie dog colony, with denning areas, food storage chambers, turnaround bays, and listening rooms. A slightly enlarged chamber at the end of one tunnel, we're informed, is a likely nest site for a burrowing owl.

It's odd. You learn things, a lot of things, as you move around within the grasslands environment. But you're not hit over the head with facts or buried in information. Instead, the kinds of things you learn are answers to questions that might arise from your own curiosity. At the ridge exhibit, for example, while looking at the snake display, you might wonder what actually rattles when the snake shakes its tail.

The rattlesnake, you learn, evolved along with large grazing animals and faced a constant threat of being crushed beneath their hooves. To warn off intruders, it vibrated a large loose scale on its tail. In time the rattle became specialized to the extent that it's now the identifying feature of the snake. Thus you've learned how one creature changed in response to a natural environmental challenge. And, having entered the world of the rattlesnake via your natural curiosity, you learn a lot more about the snake's important biological function in a grasslands habitat.

The interesting effect of this, at least on me, was to leave the exhibit with the impression that my memory had just been jogged on something I already knew. Later, on reflection, I realized that I'd had no idea how the rattlesnake got its rattle, or that the tiny rattling, interlocking plates are made of the same stuff as my own toenails.

There was indeed a story here, and I myself was its narrator. No guide or museum docent demanded my attention; there were no buttons to push to activate disembodied voice-overs explaining what I was looking at. I wandered from point to point, wherever my eyes and ears led me, reading aloud from informational plaques, musing over the industry of harvester ants, watching the diving beetles and giant water bugs in the tiny grasslands cienega, or marsh. What I came away with was a very strong impression that I understood a lot about desert grasslands.

The tale, I realized, has no beginning, middle, or end. The narrative is open-ended.

**'H**ere is a type  
of desert community.  
It's alive; it's changing.  
It's not the whole story.  
But it's an important part  
of the whole story."



(PRECEDING PANEL, PAGES 10 AND 11) A mountain lion keeps a watchful eye on visitors in the Mountain Habitat, one of the newer exhibits at Tucson's Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum.

(OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP) At home in its zoo habitat, this ocelot is a medium-size American wildcat that in the wild ranges from Texas to Patagonia.

(OPPOSITE PAGE, BELOW) Visitors enjoy a walk through the completed Desert Grasslands exhibit, getting a good idea of what the Desert Museum hopes to achieve. (ABOVE, LEFT) Though in the wild it would be wary of humans, this black-tailed prairie dog tolerates the visitors on the other side of the fence.

(ABOVE) A museum docent talks to visitors about the turkey vulture, which is often seen in Arizona's desert grasslands.



## STEPPING INTO THE WILD

It says, "Here is a type of desert community. It's alive; it's changing. It's not the whole story. But it's an important part of the whole story." One thing I knew for certain: the next time I travel through a desert grassland, I'll see it differently.

The Desert Museum's long-range plan also includes two habitats that are contiguous with the Sonoran Desert: the Tropical Deciduous Forest and the Baja California Peninsula. But the next one in line for construction is the Arizona Uplands biotic community, which happens to be the habitat in which the museum itself is situated. For that reason alone it will be the most challenging design project.

As museum visitors travel west from Tucson to the Desert Museum, they will drive through Arizona uplands. How do you get them to look at it, really look, when they enter museum grounds? That's the challenge for Desert Museum planners and curators. "Once a month we get all the curators together and walk the grounds and try to look at it as if we were seeing it for the first time," says Hancocks. "What we hope is that people coming in will see the Uplands as though their eyes had just been opened to it."

So the goal of all this innovation and planning and building at the Desert Museum is to tell stories about biodiversity; and, in the words of David Hancocks, "To show that everything in Nature is hitched to everything else." A story, as it turns out, that it's never too late to learn something about, even for zoo professionals. What happened at the hummingbird exhibit illustrates the point.



(ABOVE) Instantly alert to intruders, this Mexican gray wolf remains motionless just long enough for our photographer to take its picture.

(OPPOSITE PAGE) A marsh in the Desert Grasslands exhibit is the place to spot huge water bugs and diving beetles.

The hummingbird aviary was recently torn down and rebuilt. After finishing construction late in the year, museum staff wondered whether the birds would breed when put back into the enclosure. Spring came, and the hummingbirds began nest building in earnest. But to the chagrin of staffers, the nests collapsed. They were useless. What was wrong? Were the birds too distracted by the presence of people to build adequate nests?

"Finally," says Hancocks, "when we examined them closely, what we discovered was that the nests lacked spider-web filaments, the binding material. Rebuilding had unsettled the spiders. So we scoured the museum grounds, catching spiders and putting them back." Instantly the birds were able to build nests that stayed intact.

"When you disrupt Nature, when you remove even one apparently inconsequential item, the whole structure can collapse," Hancocks concludes. "Without spiders there can be no hummingbirds; without hummingbirds to pollinate them, no ocotillos, and so on. Whole processes are disrupted. We want to show that everything is connected. In an attractive and appealing way, of course." ■

Tom Dollar says that if imitation is the sincerest flattery, the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum is the best zoo in the world, with a lot of imitators but "none that come close." He also wrote the "Hike of the Month" in this issue.

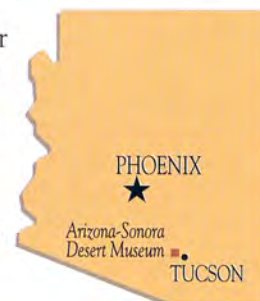
Marty Cordano once worked as a wildlife biologist for the Bureau of Land Management. He also contributed the photographs for the "Hike" this month.

## When You Go




The popular hummingbird exhibit taught the zoo professionals a lesson about the interdependency of animal species, and had them scrambling to reintroduce a spider population.

The Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, located in Tucson Mountain Park, is open from 7:30 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. every day of the year. Admission is \$7.95 for adults (age 13 and over); \$1.50 for children ages six through 12; and children under six are free. Tucson is 111 miles south of Phoenix. Take Interstate 10 to Exit 257, Speedway Boulevard. The museum is 12 miles west of the freeway. For more information on exhibits and events, write the museum at 2021 N. Kinney Road, Tucson, AZ 85743, or call (602) 883-2702.



# Pop



## Goes the Symphony

Text by Lawrence W. Cheek ☀ Photographs by Jerry Sieve

**D**oc Severinsen is out in front, conducting the orchestra and blowing his horn, teasing the melody line like a cat tormenting a mouse. In back, stepping out of the choir, soloist Vanessa Yates begins to challenge Doc's trumpet. The music, a jazz-gospel arrangement of the staid old hymn "Love Lifted Me," starts to cook.

Doc's trumpet rockets out of the treble clef into the stratosphere. Vanessa's astonishing soprano streaks by, straight into deep space, where human pipes were never meant to fly. Trumpet and soprano weave and dart and flirt so high above the musical Earth that a fatal fall, like that of Icarus, seems certain. But their duet cadences without a crash, and the audience leaps and roars in appreciation. Exhausted from

the flight, Doc turns to the stage mike and tells the crowd, "We had only so much time to prepare, so we don't really have an encore. So we'll do it *again!*" And they do.

This is a Phoenix Symphony Orchestra concert, one of 67 the orchestra will perform this season. Tonight the musicians are playing pops, arrangements of Ellington, Gershwin, and gospel hymns, and accompanying Phoenix's First Institutional Baptist Church Choir. The performance is electrifying, and the audience is ecstatic.

And the orchestra, as usual, is in trouble.

**B**ob Strava remembers the first time he heard the Phoenix Symphony Orchestra. He was in fourth grade, and the orchestra came to his school to play a concert. "I still remember coming out of that concert

and telling my friends that I was going to play the violin," he says.

Strava, now 47, plays it — he's associate principal second violin of the very orchestra that inspired him to become a musician. He worries about the future of the symphony orchestra because much has changed since he was first enchanted by the beast. "It has a lot to do with the arts in schools, and there just aren't any now," he says. "I don't understand how sports are supposed to build character and the arts don't."

Dumitru Lazarescu, another violinist, defected from Romania in 1980. He worked an assembly line for minimum wage in Boston for two years, came to Phoenix for an audition, locked himself into a room to practice eight hours a day, and won the job. His dozen years with the Phoenix Symphony

have been a mix of growth and discouragement. "I've met a lot of very good musicians, played under a lot of great conductors, played with a lot of great soloists," he says. "We've done some great concerts, like the Mahler Second with Theo Alcantara. I also like playing with Doc Severinsen. Usually classical musicians aren't very favorable to playing popular music. But in Doc's concerts, I'm stomping! I'm going for it! I'm holding nothing back. It's very uplifting."

Then Lazarescu, a slender 45 year old sporting a stylish fountain of black and silver hair, turns melancholy. "I can remember four or five occasions when we were asked to take salary cuts," he says. "People in the orchestra are demoralized. I know I'm not being recognized for what I do, and I'm not talking about my pocket — it's musical respect."

**T**hese are the best of times and the worst of times for symphony orchestras in America. The level of musical skill has never been higher; there are so many musicians in the job market that even modest-size communities can attract fine talent. But they're having much less success attracting audiences and contributions.

Since the mid-1980s, several American orchestras have cancelled seasons, downsized themselves, or gone out of business. The reasons are legion, from too costly contracts with their musicians to indifference among most under-50 Americans to the music they play.

And there is more competition for entertainment dollars than ever. People who love orchestral music can invest a couple of thousand dollars in a terrific surround-sound

system and invite the Berlin Philharmonic into their living rooms, something that couldn't really be done convincingly until the advent of compact discs a decade ago.

"The main thing that's causing the crisis is a basic change in the culture," says *Phoenix Gazette* music critic Kenneth LaFave. "It's the ascendancy of pop culture and the descent of so-called high culture. What we call classical music was a very popular statement with a cultural

(OPPOSITE PAGE) What goes on today in downtown's Phoenix Symphony Hall reflects nothing less than a change in the culture, says one music critic. (ABOVE) Mike Brown's concentration is reflected in his trombone, as he performs with the Phoenix Symphony Orchestra.





background that is now disappearing. The statement required the background, and when the background started to go away, the statement started to lose its significance."

The Phoenix Symphony has special problems. Symphony orchestras typically make less than half their income in ticket sales, relying mainly on corporate and individual largess for the rest. Phoenix, a big but young city, has headquarters of only two of the Fortune 500 companies (Phelps Dodge and Dial) and very little loyal old money. Old money moves to Phoenix from Boston and Cleveland, goes downtown on warm winter evenings for Phoenix Symphony concerts, and sends the check Back East to the Boston Symphony or Cleveland Orchestra. Yet established orchestras have \$50 million or more in endowment funds to help them bridge recessions. Phoenix has \$90,000 in its endowment — enough to run the business for six days.

For more than a dozen years now, the Phoenix Symphony has lurched from one frightening financial crisis to another. It started with the best of intentions: former Music Director Theo Alcantara's ambition to build a major orchestra.

Alcantara dismissed and recruited musicians, doubled the budget in one year, and converted it to fully professional status — meaning daytime rehearsals, so that playing in the orchestra became a full-time job. Musically, it worked.

For decades the much older Tucson Symphony (founded in 1929) had been a better orchestra, but by the mid-1980s the PSO (founded in 1947) was clearly superior. When it traveled to Los Angeles for the first time in 1993, the reviewer for the *Los Angeles Times* laced his report with lavish praise, calling it an "excellent orchestra." The PSO's first two recordings, an all-Copland CD in 1991 and a 1992 pairing of Bernard Herrmann and William Schuman, both won extravagant reviews.

But it has been a turbulent ride; the PSO has had near-death experiences. In 1992 it was saved only by heroic measures, the most dramatic being Phoenix Suns CEO Jerry Colangelo's phone calls to his friends, raising \$375,000 in one morning. In 1993 the orchestra slimmed down from 82 to 72 players, cut salaries nine percent, and shaved the season back from 37 to 33 weeks.

Conrad Kloh, a retired newspaper executive now serving as the orchestra's interim CEO, says there was no choice. "We negotiated with the musicians and came to the understanding that we really didn't have a cigar box with a lot of money in it. What we said was that we could no longer pay them what they deserved; we could pay them only what we could afford.

"I'm a great believer in managing for survival. If you don't survive, good things can't happen to you."

There may be a glow at the end of the financial tunnel. The budget is finally

balanced; it was projected that in 1994 there would be \$5.2 million in income and \$5.2 million in expenses. The National Arts Stabilization Fund would give the PSO \$1 million over five years. And the recession appears over.

The larger problem endures: convincing the community that the orchestra is a treasure, something to be nurtured, cherished — and listened to.

Severinsen, who has been the PSO's principal pops conductor since 1983, is frankly peeved at the spotty support. "We have a world-class major

symphony orchestra in this state, and people don't give it the attention and credibility they need to. This orchestra should fit right in with all the natural wonders of Arizona. It's a great resource.

"At some point, they're going to have to make up their minds: do we want a symphony orchestra of major quality? If they decide they don't, then the musicians can pack up and go somewhere they are wanted, and let the community here say, well, thank God we're through with that. We don't have to hear any more about the arts."

Like its counterparts in many cities, the Phoenix Symphony Orchestra slowly is evolving into a new creature, and whether it survives depends on whether it figures out what to become.

Pops concerts, featuring anything from Rodgers and Hammerstein to the Smothers Brothers, have become a serious part of most orchestras' repertoire. When this began a couple of decades back, classical music lovers groaned and heaved — with good reason, because classical musicians



played pops dismally. They could swing, as one downstate musician observed of the Tucson Symphony, about like rusty gates. This has changed dramatically. Today's players are younger; the average age in the PSO is 37.

"We have players who've had experience playing rock and jazz, all different kinds of music, and they're adept at different things," Severinsen says. "Everyone has a better attitude about it. Also there are a lot better arrangements around today."

On the classical side, a more multicultural approach to repertoire also is reeling in a new audience. In 1993 the PSO played the *Two World Concerto for Native American Flute and Orchestra* by Arizona State University composer James DeMars. Navajo flutist R. Carlos Nakai was the soloist. Symphony Hall sold out. The message: great music wasn't just written by long-dead Europeans.

Music critic LaFave fears today's symphony orchestra is a dinosaur, but thinks it can survive if it changes. Orchestras, he says, need to: hang up the formal attire; move out of their grand, cold, downtown concert halls, and play where the people are; and reinvent themselves

*If I wanted to hear  
Debussy, Ravel,  
Rachmaninoff,  
Shostakovich, Prokofiev,  
this orchestra would be  
an excellent choice.'*

as profit-making collectives owned and operated by the musicians.

"The idea of the nonprofit corporation with a board of rich people, abetted by a large unwieldy administrative staff making decisions they ought not to make and spending money in the wrong ways, is a disaster," says LaFave. "That's the dinosaur. Not the music, not the playing of it, but the way it's run."

James Sedares now holds the conductor's baton. It's a Friday morning rehearsal at Symphony Hall, so he and the musicians are in shirtsleeves. Sedares succeeded Alcantara as principal conductor in 1989; he was only 33. This is the fourth and final rehearsal for tonight's concert, and it is intense. The program includes Bartók's *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celeste*, a minefield of rhythmic hazards. It's outrageously difficult, and the players don't know it nearly as well as the other music on the agenda: Beethoven's *Overture to Fidelio* and the Brahms Piano Concerto in D Minor. Sedares talks economically and rapidly to make his points; if the rehearsal spills a minute over 2½ hours, 72 musicians will be on overtime pay — the last thing the Phoenix Symphony needs.

"Basses, you're tentative about your entrance on that second beat. People are coming in all over the place, and you've got to be stronger."

Later Sedares explains what he's been

doing in five years of rehearsals

to fix what he saw as the orchestra's one major weakness: emphasize rhythm, rhythm, rhythm.

"There are people who will say music is three things: intonation, intonation, and intonation," he says. "But it all begins with rhythm. The first music was a guy beating on a hollow log with a stick. It was rhythm;

it really wasn't pitch. Rhythm sets the whole thing in motion."

Sedares, an articulate and genial man, clearly admires the orchestra. "It has a muscular, gorgeous sound. The strings can play Hollywood, they can play pops, they can play Brahms — equally well. We've got major, major virtuosos in key chairs: concertmaster, cello, trumpet, oboe, bassoon. It's the best of this level orchestra in the country, and not just because I'm the music director."

LaFave, who grades the concerts every

week, is just slightly less laudatory: "It's a good orchestra; it's not a great orchestra. It's weak in 18th-century repertoire. It does Russian and American music and anything since about 1885 very, very well. If I wanted to hear Debussy, Ravel, Rachmaninoff, Shostakovich, Prokofiev, this orchestra would be an excellent choice. For American music, I can't think of anybody better than Jim Sedares."



(ABOVE)  
When PSO Principal Conductor James Sedares took the baton from his predecessor, he concentrated on improving the orchestra's "one major weakness" — plus making sure the rehearsals didn't go into expensive overtime.

Americans are nowhere in sight on tonight's program, but it goes well. Even in its now-downsized form, the orchestra generates ferocious energy, and one reason is Sedares' obsession with icepick-sharp rhythm. The Beethoven is as tight as a fighter's fist. There are moments in the Bartók when the strings play with an ethereal, even spooky, subtlety — and other moments when they sound spooked in that minefield. Sedares himself later says he wished he had had the budget for one more rehearsal.

In the Brahms, Sedares and soloist André-Michel Schub launch the brilliant third movement rondo at a turbocharged tempo, ignoring the composer's caveat of *allegro non troppo* (not too fast). Probably no 19th-century orchestra ever had the chops to take it at this speed. It's Brahms reborn late in the 20th century — true to his spirit, but infused with the fury of our time.

Which is a lot like the Phoenix Symphony's larger challenge: to thrive in a time of fury without losing its soul. ▀

**Editor's Note:** The PSO's 1995 season extends through May 5. For information regarding performances or to obtain a brochure, telephone (602) 264-6363.

*Lawrence W. Cheek was music critic for the Tucson Citizen from 1973 to 1987. He plays the piano and guitar. Jerry Sieve feels a special fondness for the Phoenix Symphony Orchestra because it once performed a concerto grosso composed by his then-nine-year-old son Tristan (he's 11 now), a violinist who wants to be a baseball player.*



A PORTFOLIO  
BY ADRIEL HEISEY

# NATURE'S ARTISTRY

My sectional aeronautical chart of northern Arizona hardly ever leaves its case these days. I know the land it stands for now like my grandmother's face.

Years of flying over Diné Bikeyah, as the Navajos call their land, have taken me deeper into a love of its complexion; I am moved to see more than geologic curiosities in its upturned face. Something else is here. Though I am not born Navajo, I sense something distinctly Navajo breathing between Earth and sky.

These cascading colors and spontaneous symmetries are revealed best in the raven's view, yet they emerge in the art and lifeways of these people whose history is far older than flying machines.

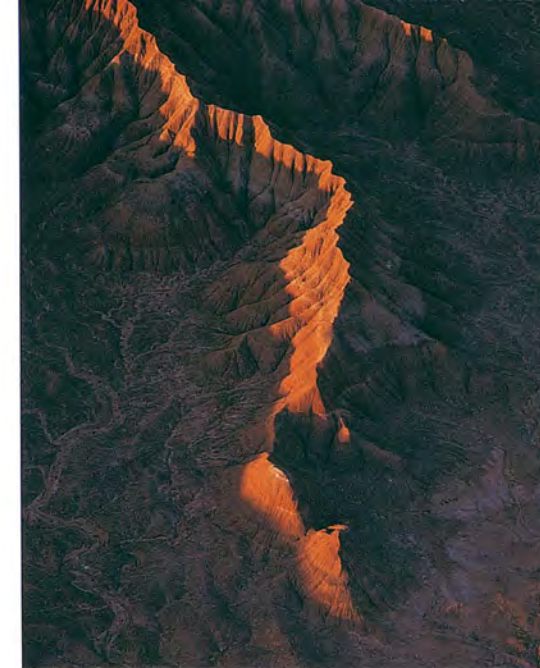
As I fly in this space, I am witness to a mystery. Do these places whisper in the dreams of the Diné? Do the weavers and basket makers and potters and silversmiths and sand painters and singers and storytellers come soaring over these places when their bodies lie sleeping? Do the minerals of the land infuse their corn and sheep and wells and breath to find their way into the people's minds and eyes and voices and fingers? Flying close over this ancient land, I wonder . . .



(OPPOSITE PAGE) Looking as if they were sculpted by man's hands rather than Nature's whimsy, stacked chevrons flank an anticline just north of the Arizona-Utah border.

(ABOVE) Entrada sandstone ripples along a hillside in Coal Mine Canyon.

IN THE LAND OF THE NAVAJOS



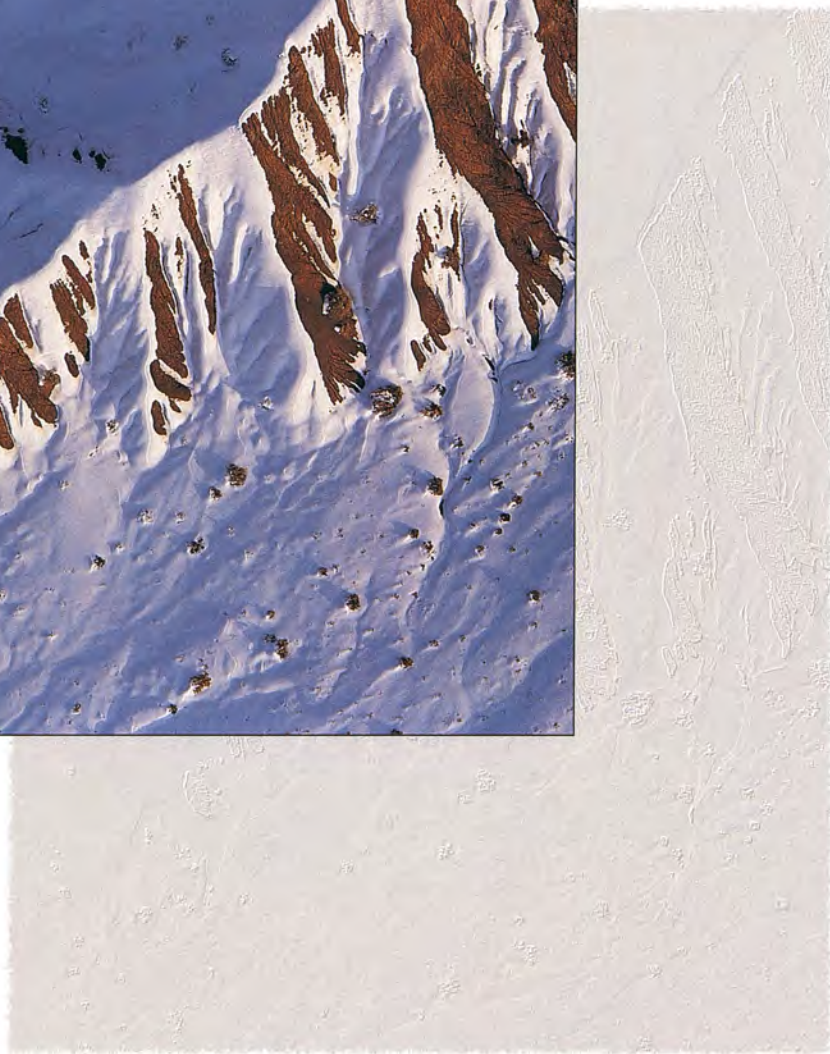
(LEFT) At first glance,  
Chinle formation  
in the Painted Desert  
gives the impression  
that a horde  
of small animals  
left their tracks  
while passing through.  
(ABOVE) The sun highlights  
ridge patterns  
of Chinle formation  
in the Painted Desert.



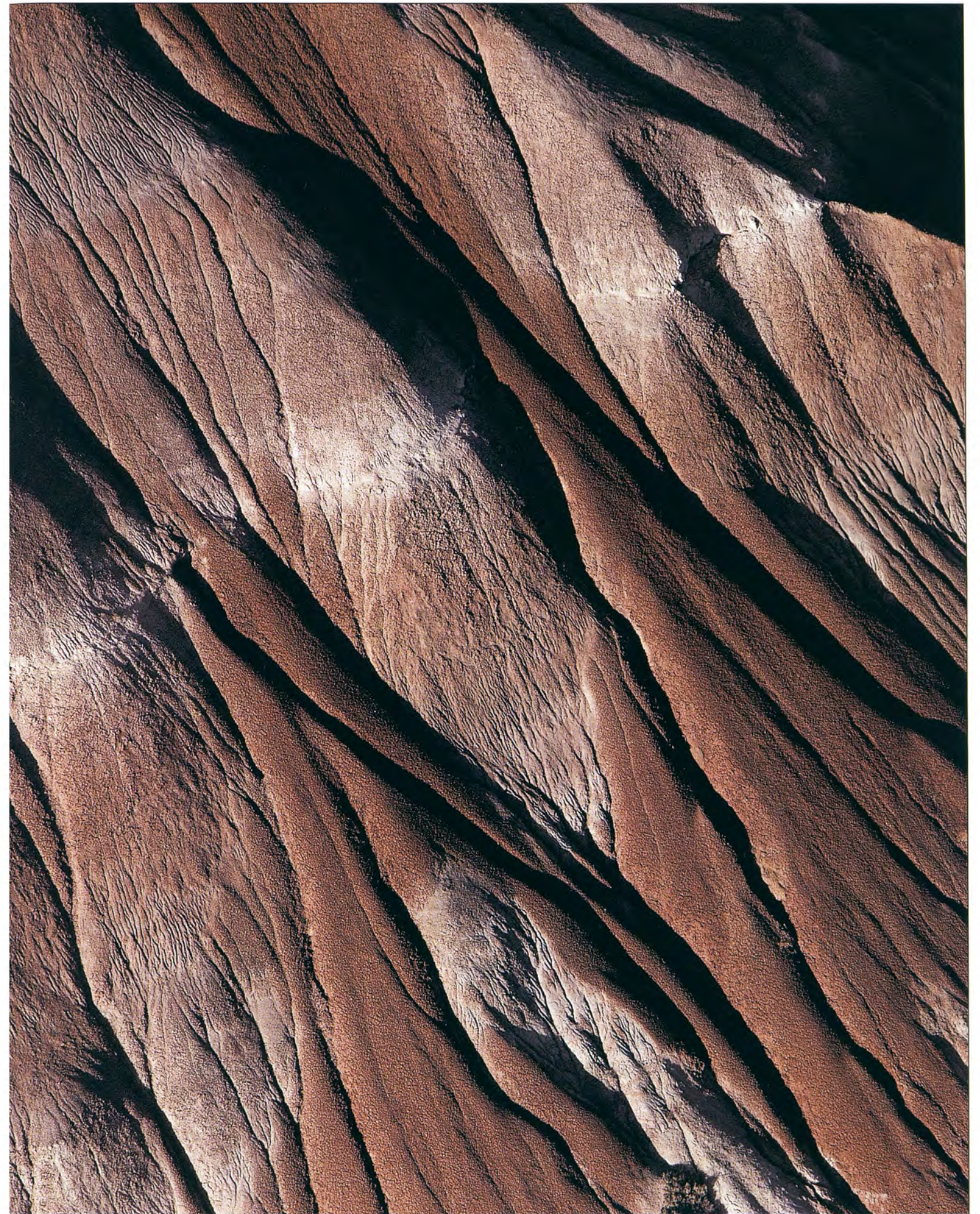


(PRECEDING PANEL, PAGES 24 AND 25) Sand dunes near Los Gigantes Buttes ripple into one another, ever-changing with the caprice of the winds.  
 (LEFT) Sand dunes ascend a hillside in Little Capitan Valley.  
 (ABOVE) In Blue Canyon, patterns erupt in Carmel formation.





(PRECEDING PANEL, PAGES 28 AND 29)  
*This Entrada sandstone formation  
 looks as if it could have been found  
 on the moon by an astronaut,  
 but it has existed for eons  
 in Ha Ho No Geh Canyon.*  
 (ABOVE) *The snow melts first  
 on the sunward slope of this  
 Chinle formation near Lupton.*  
 (RIGHT) *Alluvial fans spread across  
 a hillside in an expanse of Chinle  
 formation in Beautiful Valley.*



**A**ll the elements of explosive confrontation came together that sunny afternoon of June 24, 1882, on St. Johns' dusty main street: Catholics vs. Mormons, Hispanics vs. Anglos, New Mexicans vs. Texans, and — most emotional of all — sheepmen vs. cattlemen.

Three defiant young Greer brothers and five of their ranch hands faced an angry mob of Hispanic shearers spilling into the street in front of Sol Barth's hotel. Insults were flung in Spanish and English, and sunlight glinted off six-guns and rifles.

Then shots rang out — both sides claimed the other fired first — blood spurted, and the Greers scattered for cover.

The Battle of San Juan's Day, the climax of a range war that rivaled the famed Earp-Clanton and Graham-Tewksbury feuds in both bitterness and loss of life, was under way.

It was a slow-burning fuse that ignited the St. Johns warfare, a fuse that was lit during the Mexican War of 1846-'48 when Thomas Lacy Greer was wounded by a Mexican bullet. It festered in his body, along with a dislike of Mexicans, as long as he lived. Greer returned to Texas after being discharged from the Army, was converted to the Mormon faith, became a wealthy cattleman, and in 1877 brought his wife and eight children, along with their cattle and horses, to north-eastern Arizona Territory.

Their arrival preceded by three years the more publicized coming of David King Udall and his band of Mormon settlers from Utah.

The Greers bought a ranch 18 miles northwest of the tiny village of St. Johns in 1878 and were soon running cattle on a million acres of grassland in newly created (1879) Apache County.

This incursion of gringos and their cattle aroused indignation in the breasts of Hispanic sheepmen who were there first, since 1866, in fact. It was in that year that Juan Candelaria drove his flock of 750 merinos from Cubero,

New Mexico, and established a ranch near present-day Concho. Not long after the Greers arrived, the New Mexicans retaliated by bringing in 10,000 more sheep, which often strayed onto the Greer range and cropped the once-lush grass down to ground level.

And then, in 1880 and '81, a tidal wave of 80,000 more woolies surged in, making much of the range unusable for raising cattle. During the winter of 1881-'82, the Greer cattle were scattered to the four winds by the shearers. Many were stolen, and not more than half of the animals were recovered. To the Greers, the goal of the Mexican herders seemed clear: to drive them and their newcomer Anglo neighbors out of the county.

Thomas Lacy Greer and his five sturdy sons had no intention of letting that happen. They fought back, riding out to raid sheep camps, scatter the flocks, and frighten the herders out of their wits. Nat Greer, eldest of the sons, recalled later that he caught a herder trying to run off Greer livestock.

"I gave him a choice: I'd shoot him on the spot, or I'd earmark [cut a notch from his ear, as with cattle] so I could identify him if we ever met again. He decided to let me cut his ear."

## The Bloodiest Range War in Apache County

After that incident and many other clashes, both sides were spoiling for a showdown. It came on June 24, a gala holiday in the heavily Hispanic community of St. Johns. To celebrate San Juan's Day, the locals had spared no expense, bringing in musicians and acrobats and staging a bullfight with a matador direct from Mexico City.

In an apparent gesture of conciliation, they invited the Greer boys (their father had died a year earlier) to ride in for the celebration and the cattle sale which was to follow. Nat, 25; Dick, 18; and Harris, 16, accepted the invitation with some trepidation and brought with them several hundred dollars with which to buy cattle for their depleted herd.

They also brought their guns, plenty of ammunition, and five of their cowboys, also armed, just in case.

Heading the welcoming committee was none other than Sol Barth, St. Johns' leading businessman, who had married a pretty Mexican woman and was regarded as the spokesman for the sheepmen. He led the Greer party to the arena where the acrobats were performing and urged the cattlemen to enjoy themselves.

What happened next has been reported in a confusing and conflicting variety of ways. One version is that a Greer cowboy fired his pistol as a prank while a high-wire acrobat was in midair, causing him to fall. Another had the visitors boisterously shooting up the town. Neither seems likely in view of the Greers' well-founded fear that an ambush might be brewing.

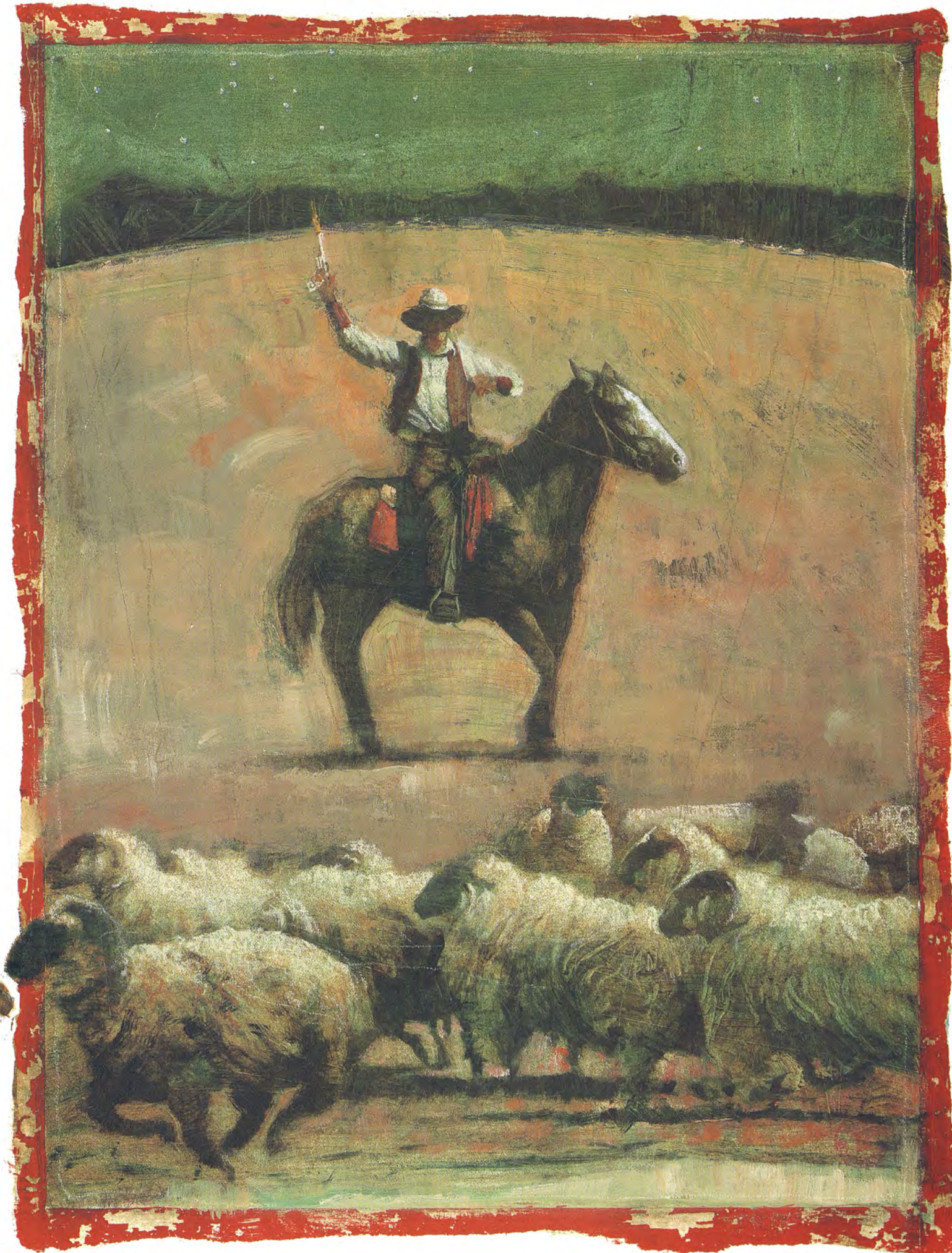
Here is Nat Greer's account, as recorded by his nephew, Errol C. Brown:



# SHEEPMEN VS CATTLEMEN

Text by Dean Smith

Illustrations by Phil Boatwright



"While all this [the acrobatics] was going on, we noticed that quite a few of the local men were going in and out of a nearby saloon. Nearly all were armed, and they were getting rowdy and excitable . . . We left to get something to eat, and I . . . looked out on the main street and saw fifteen or twenty men coming our way, all with six-guns and rifles. I told the others we had better move fast, split up and work our way out of town."

"Joe Woods, Frank Drew, Hi Hatch and Jeff [Tribit] went out the back door of the store, headed for my brother Gilbert's house to get our horses. My brothers Harris and Richard and I, with James Vaughn, headed for a vacant house. We were nearly there when the shooting started."

"Most of the oncoming men were in front of the Barth Hotel. We started shooting back, and some of them went inside the hotel and started shooting from the upper story windows. The four of us in the house had only our six-guns, plenty of bullets in our belts, but our shooting wasn't too effective at that distance."

"Not long after we got in the house, James Vaughn was hit by a rifle shot from the hotel window. It knocked him down on the floor."

"Then Harris received a bullet in his hand. We wrapped it up in my neckerchief and he was able to keep shooting. But we were not able to help James, and he died in a few minutes."

Bullets whined both ways for 15 or 20 minutes, with agonized outcries from the hotel and street attesting to the accuracy of the Greer gunfire. The Mexican gunners were equally deadly, and both Hatch and Tribit (a former Greer slave) were wounded by rifle fire as they made a dash for safety with the Greer horses.

The frenzied attackers made one desperate raid in force on the house where the three brothers lay in wait, but the Greers beat it back.

"They came so close that we couldn't miss them unless we shut our eyes and aimed at the sky!" Nat Greer later declared. Screaming in anger and frustration, the attackers fell back.

Maurice Kildare, who wrote a lurid story of the battle for a Western pulp magazine based on his interviews with Nat and Dick Greer, declared that six Mexicans had been killed and many others wounded up to that moment in the deadly battle. If that were true, Barth and the sheepmen hushed up their losses. No Hispanic deaths were reported in the several newspaper accounts of the affair.

There was one more killing yet to come. Mormon elder Nathan Tenney, a friend of the Greers, strode bravely between the

**I settled the war, but it cost the lives of nearly 300 men, including five of my deputies. The sheep and cattlemen shot it out with each other, and some 295 were killed.**

battle lines carrying a white flag and demanded the right to arrange a truce.

"Mr. Tenney came into the house and said we'd better give up," Nat Greer said in recounting the episode to Errol Brown, "or we surely would all be killed. He said [as far as he knew] we had hit only one of our enemies, and hadn't killed any of them."

Tenney was leading the four out of the house onto the street when a rifle bullet from upstairs in the Barth Hotel slammed into his head and killed him instantly. Soon thereafter, Deputy Sheriff Tom Perez arrived and ordered the Greers to give up, which they did.

The bloody Battle of San Juan's Day was over.

Arizona Territory journalism in 1882 was not notable for its objectivity. Consider this front page story in the Tucson *Arizona Citizen* of July 9, 1882, which was the first and most detailed report of the battle. It possibly was written in part by Sol Barth and was headlined "Bloody War — How St. John's Day Was Celebrated in St. Johns":

"The 24th of June, being a day for festivities among Mexican Catholics, everybody was having a good time and witnessing an acrobatic performance . . . when everyone was startled by the report of firearms . . . To make a long story short, seven or eight Mormon cowboys came into town for the purpose of running the town and enacting another Mountain Meadows Massacre."

"A fight took place in the streets; rifle bullets and pistolballs were flying through the air. The fight . . . finally got too hot for [the Mormons] and three or four, one wounded, lit out in somewhat of a hurry. The other four, headed by Nat Greer, took possession

of an adobe house and kept up the fight.

"Of the four in the house, James Vaughn was killed and Dixie Greer [actually, Harris Greer] wounded through the left hand. Nathan C. Tenney, a prominent Mormon and former bishop, was shot through the head and instantly killed. The Greer brothers then gave themselves up and all is quiet, but farseeing ones are prognosticating more serious trouble in the near future."

Prescott's *Arizona Miner* reprinted the item five days later, adding that "Bishop Tenney, well known here, now sleeps beneath the cover of clay . . . Perhaps a stray bullet hit him in the head."

The item ended with this comment: "The Greers are under arrest and no doubt will be tried at this term of court." And then: "We have but one side of the story."

An honest and accurate admission, indeed.

The *Citizen's* final statement was equally accurate: there was much more serious trouble to come.

The St. Johns gun battle was not the first, and far from the last, confrontation of Hispanic sheepmen and Anglo cattlemen in Apache County during the bloody 1880s.

Lorenzo Hubbell, the famed Indian trader, was sheriff of the county at the time of the San Juan's Day shoot-out. In a later memoir written for *The Sheriff* magazine, Hubbell declared that "I'd scarcely been elected sheriff before a war broke out between the sheep and cattle men all over this section of the territory. The cattle men were Texans and they opened bloody warfare upon all the poor, ignorant Mexicans, Indians and Spanish-Americans who owned the sheep."

He settled the war in three years, he claimed, by jailing the Texans whenever possible.

"I was shot at from ambush a dozen times and my home had been converted into a veritable fort. For one solid year not a member of my family went to bed except behind barricaded doors and windows."

Then came Hubbell's most astounding statement:

"I settled the war, but it cost the lives of nearly 300 men, including five of my deputies. The sheep and cattle men shot it out with each other, and some 295 were killed."

No documentation exists to verify the number of casualties in the bitter struggle of more than a decade, but no other participant or historian has estimated losses even approaching 300. Some Greer family members believe as many as 50 lost their lives before an uneasy peace was restored. If that figure is accurate, this little-known warfare killed almost as many men as did the long

and bloody Pleasant Valley War, Grahams vs. Tewksburys, a few years later.

One of the Apache County deaths came at the hands of Dick Greer a few months after the St. Johns shoot-out. With Joe Woods and Jeff Tribit, he raided a sheep camp and was confronted by the well-armed Hispanic herder. Greer was quicker on the draw and his adversary fell lifeless.

After burying the herder in a shallow grave and running sheep over it to tamp down the earth, the three rode to Holbrook to report the incident to Judge Frank Watron. With the aid of Commodore Perry Owens, soon to become one of Apache County's most colorful sheriffs, the three were released without a trial.

And what was the aftermath of the Battle of San Juan's Day? The three Greer brothers who had fortified up in the adobe house were charged with wounding sheepman Francisco Tafolla and assault with intent to commit murder. None of their adversaries was ever tried for the killing of Vaughn and Tenney.

The St. Johns saloon was converted into a courtroom for the trial of the Greers, and

a host of vengeful Hispanics crowded in to seek places on the jury. However, armed Mormons stood along the saloon walls to ensure a fair proceeding and to be available for selection to the jury.

Because territorial law required jury members to be U.S. citizens and to speak English, few of the Hispanics were qualified to serve. When selection was completed the jury was thus heavily Mormon, and it promptly found the Greers "not guilty." Much to the chagrin of the sheepmen, the three were freed to return to their ranch, there to plan strategy for continuing the range war.

The rawhide-tough Greer boys ultimately settled down to become prosperous Apache County ranchers, community leaders, and faithful servants of their church. Dick's son was elected Navajo County attorney, and other progeny held similar places of trust. The Greer boys' later lives were as peaceful as their early years had been violent.

Two graves in St. Johns' westside cemetery bear mute evidence to the bloodshed of that violent June 24. On one gravestone: "In honor of Nathan C. Tenney . . . who

died while saving life and making peace." On the other: "Farewell James H. Vaughn . . . murdered by a Mexican mob June 24, 1882." ■

**Author's Note:** Because it was not a passionate feud between families, with well-known personalities on both sides, the Apache County Range War never has caught the fancy of novelists and folklorists as did the Earp-Clanton and Graham-Tewksbury warfare. But it was no less bloody. Before the decade of violence was spent, probably as many as 50 men were killed, although many of the casualties went unrecorded. There were no good guys or bad guys in this Western thriller — only people of different cultures striving to eke out a living in an inhospitable land.

Dean Smith is the author and/or editor of 10 books on Arizona history and personalities. His conversation with Ben Greer, great-great-grandson of Dick Greer, a participant in the St. Johns gun battle, sparked his research into this little-known saga of Arizona history. Dallas-based Phil Boatwright especially enjoys illustrating tales of the Old Southwest.



# Every Sled Dog Has Its Day At Flagstaff's Mini-Iditarod

Text by Rose Houk Photographs by Michael Collier



Was it "gee, Micah"? Or was it "haw, Eli?" I struggled to recall these critical commands as I hung onto the back of the speeding dogsled and tried to sort my left from my right. Micah and Eli are not mules but beautiful Siberian huskies that were pulling me across snowy fields near Flagstaff.

Their owner, dogsled racer Cheryl Crum, was generously letting me try out her team and sled at the end of the two-day Winterfest races held in February. I had never been to a sled-dog race before, much less driven a sled. After seeing the impressive strength and speed of the dogs, I requested only a brief ride with two of Cheryl's slowest dogs.

Like many others, Cheryl initially had no interest in dogsledding — until someone gave her a husky as a pet. Then, after seeing an ad for sled dogs, "I kind of went wacko," she said laughing. Now she and her husband, Brian, keep 33 dogs at their log home north of Flagstaff, including the Siberians which are bred for endurance and Alaskan huskies which are bred for speed.

On Sunday morning at the Winterfest races, ear-splitting cacophony reigned as Cheryl harnessed her team for the four-dog event. Micah and Anna were her lead dogs; behind them were the "wheel" dogs, Gideon and Odie. All four barked and lunged and strained at their collars, leaving no doubt of their love for running.

Lined up at the chute, Cheryl stood firmly on the brake of her aluminum-runner ash sled, while handlers restrained the dogs. As with all racers, Cheryl equipped her rig with a mean-looking metal hook that can be thrown into the snow to hold the sled and team temporarily. Her gear also included a pink nylon sled bag, required in case a dog is injured during a race. Dogs cannot be added if one is lost along the way.

Cheryl's eyes, the color of those of her huskies, squinted in intense concentration. Contending for first place, she knew this race would require her utmost effort. Dogsled racing, she assured me, is not an activity for couch potatoes. If you're

(LEFT) Cheryl Crum shouts a command to her Siberian Huskies as she navigates a trail near the San Francisco Peaks, north of Flagstaff.

(ABOVE, RIGHT) Sled dogs wait (humanely) in cages aboard their truck for either a chance to race, or a ride home.


doing it right, she said, "you should be the other dog on the team. It's not a hang-on, go-for-a-ride kind of thing if you're competing." Not when a full dog team can average 20 miles an hour or faster when they're fresh out of the chute.

"Ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, one ... go!" the starters shouted. Cheryl and her canine locomotives, fueled with nothing more than meat-flavored water, shot full speed from the chute, taking the first turn with lovely grace. Seated nearby at a portable radio, Brian reported each racer's progress along the course. In the last half-mile of the track, called the "free zone," Cheryl's closest contender, Flagstaff sixth-grader Nick Odegard, was in hot pursuit. (In these races, there's no age or gender separation.) The final results would have to await the officials' tallies.

When the two days' race times were combined, Cheryl posted 24 minutes and 36 seconds, 46 seconds behind Nick. When the trophies and checks were awarded, Cheryl gave young Nick both congratulations and a little friendly ribbing. Later she expressed pleasure with



her winnings: the money would buy more dog food, not a small expense when your 33 dogs consume more than 80 pounds each week. "You never pay for the sport," Cheryl admitted. "You've just got to love the dogs."

With role models like Cheryl Crum, who knows. Maybe someday I'll train for the Iditarod. Once I learn gee from haw. 

Rose Houk, an avid outdoor recreationist, lives in Flagstaff.

Michael Collier has been photographing the scenery and events of northern Arizona for 25 years.

## WHEN YOU GO

The 9th Annual Flagstaff Winterfest will be held February 3-20, with 18 days



of winter sports and games plus three theme weekends. The theme of the first weekend, February 4-5, will be "Cool Jazz Jam," a joint music festival with NAU. The second weekend, "Romancing the Snow," February 11-12, will feature the sanctioned dogsled races, which will be held at a park 18 miles north of town. The theme of the last weekend, February 17-20, will be a fiesta winter-style. For more information, contact Flagstaff Winterfest at (602) 556-9900.

(LEFT) Cheryl Crum waits for a race to start as she gets some help preparing her sled.



# TIME-TRAVELING AT Yuma Crossing

I enter the camp with caution, even uncertainty. But I feel instantly more comfortable as he welcomes me warmly to his fire on this cool, sunny morning.

I ask him what news has reached the crossing; he informs me California has petitioned for statehood, and that poses a problem: will it enter as a free or slave state? He speaks knowledgeably, having just returned from the goldfields. "Currently," he notes, "we have



TEXT BY PHILIP VARNEY   PHOTOGRAPHS BY FRED GRIFFIN

exactly 15 free and 15 slave states. California will create an imbalance." I nod, glad to be reminded of the problem that resulted in the Missouri Compromise.



Quite simply,  
Yuma Crossing ensured the safe settlement  
of Arizona and New Mexico  
during the Apache wars.

I feel like a time traveler as I visit the Yuma Crossing Quartermaster Depot Historic State Park in Yuma, Arizona, in the mid-1990s. My fellow traveler is here as well. Only he is living the year 1850.

He is among four people at Yuma Crossing's "Emigrant Camp" reviving the past in the only historical re-creation west of the Mississippi. The emigrants follow the 1850 calendar as if it were their own, reacting to news of Indian attacks and gold strikes. Their clothing has no zippers. Their coffee is hand-ground and incredibly strong.

The one who welcomed me to the fire, whom I consider "My Emigrant," is different from the others: he has seen the gold rush and is returning, disappointed and disillusioned, to his St. Louis home.

My Emigrant, the most gregarious of the group, is openly curious about me, the new arrival at camp. "What is your trade?" he queries. When I reply I am a writer, he says, "For Harper's Weekly, perhaps?"

I grope for an answer. There is no Arizona Highways in 1850. "No, I only aspire to Harper's. I'm a reporter for . . . the Weekly Arizonian in Tubac."

He smiles, "Ah, Tubac. Old Spanish settlement."

I smile wanly. The newspaper, Arizona's first, debuted in 1859. I've blown it, but fortunately my argonaut doesn't know that.

I am here at the Emigrant Camp on Yuma Crossing Day, the last Saturday in February, which celebrates Yuma's importance to the opening of the West.

Yuma is a place where history runs deep.

When Spaniards first navigated north from the Sea of Cortes up the Colorado River in 1540, they peaceably encountered seven Indian tribes, whom the Spaniards collectively called "Yumans." The leader of the party, Hernando de Alarcon, had been sent on an unsuccessful expedition to re-provision Coronado as he searched fruitlessly for the fabled Seven Cities of Gold.

The Spanish finally established an outpost and mission in 1779, with Father Francisco Garces in charge. The location was important because it was near the confluence of the Gila and Colorado rivers, where the

Colorado could be crossed relatively easily. The Spaniards coexisted with the Yuma tribe that lived at the confluence, the Quechan (kweet-SAHN), until the Spanish broke promises made to the Indians. A 1781 uprising left 101 Spanish dead, including Father Garces. The Spanish never again attempted to occupy Quechan lands.

The first Americans to view Yuma Crossing were mountain men and trappers, including James Ohio Pattie in 1826 and Kit Carson, who, with a trapping party in 1829, gathered a huge harvest of pelts and furs from the Colorado and Gila rivers. Carson returned in 1846, guiding a military expedition led by Col. Stephen Watts Kearny.

The 1849 gold rush dramatically altered the importance of Yuma Crossing. The subsequent flood of newcomers required military protection, so the U.S. Army established Camp Calhoun, later called Camp Yuma, on a promontory on the California side of the Colorado. The

(PRECEDING PANEL, PAGES 38 AND 39) It was on the bank of the Colorado River at Yuma Crossing in 1864 that the Quartermaster Depot was built.

The Depot was important in the Indian wars because from there supplies were sent out to forts as far away as New Mexico and Texas.

(INSET) Jim McMullen, left, Jennifer Wick, Priscilla Temple, and Julian Soto participate in Yuma Crossing's unique historical re-creation.

(RIGHT) The Depot's Office of the Quartermaster holds exhibits of military artifacts and riverboat memorabilia.

(OPPOSITE PAGE) Acting as a woman who lived there more than a century ago would, Alma McKenna, a historical interpreter, places a kerosene lamp in the window of the Office of the Quartermaster.



camp was upgraded in 1852 to Fort Yuma.

Yuma developed into a keystone for the southwestern United States. It offered the best all-weather route to California. Even more importantly, the Quartermaster Depot, built on the riverbank in 1864, became the base from which military supplies, sent up the Sea of Cortes and the Colorado River to Yuma, were dispersed north to Fort Mohave and then east to Fort Whipple. Supplies also went east along the Gila Trail to fortify Fort McDowell, Fort Lowell, Fort Bowie, and Fort Huachuca, and as far away as New Mexico and western Texas as well. Quite simply, Yuma Crossing ensured the safe settlement of Arizona and New Mexico during the Apache wars.

Yuma's importance as a supply depot and fort declined when the Southern Pacific Railroad arrived in 1877, and the confrontations with the Indians ended. Because the railroad supplanted wagons as the cheapest, fastest way to send goods, the Quartermaster Depot closed in 1883. Fort Yuma ceased operations a year later. The completion of Laguna Dam in 1909 effectively ended river travel.

Many motorists today think of Yuma as a refueling stop on the way to San Diego or as a refuge for winter visitors. It is much more, and Yuma Crossing Day gives the town a chance to strut its historical stuff.

I began the day at the Yuma Crossing



Many motorists today think of Yuma as a refueling stop on the way to San Diego....

It is much more, and Yuma Crossing Day gives the town a chance to strut its historical stuff.

Quartermaster Depot Historic State Park, featuring our four 1850 emigrants encamped in a clearing near their wagons. The restored Office of the Quartermaster, built around 1872, contains informative displays ranging from military uniforms and weaponry to riverboat memorabilia. Adjacent to the office is an 1865 water reservoir. Nearby stands the commanding officer's home and kitchen featuring period furniture and, occasionally, samples of 19th-century recipes.

The structure was built about 1859 as the grand residence of steamboat magnate George Alonzo Johnson. Here visitors can explore the entire building instead of merely peering into cordoned-off rooms as is common at historic sites. One can even sit in chairs, play the piano, and feel the grain of an oak table. The emigrants outside may be reliving history, but it's alive inside the buildings of Yuma Crossing as well.

Because my Crossing Day brochure lists so many activities, I leave the Quartermaster

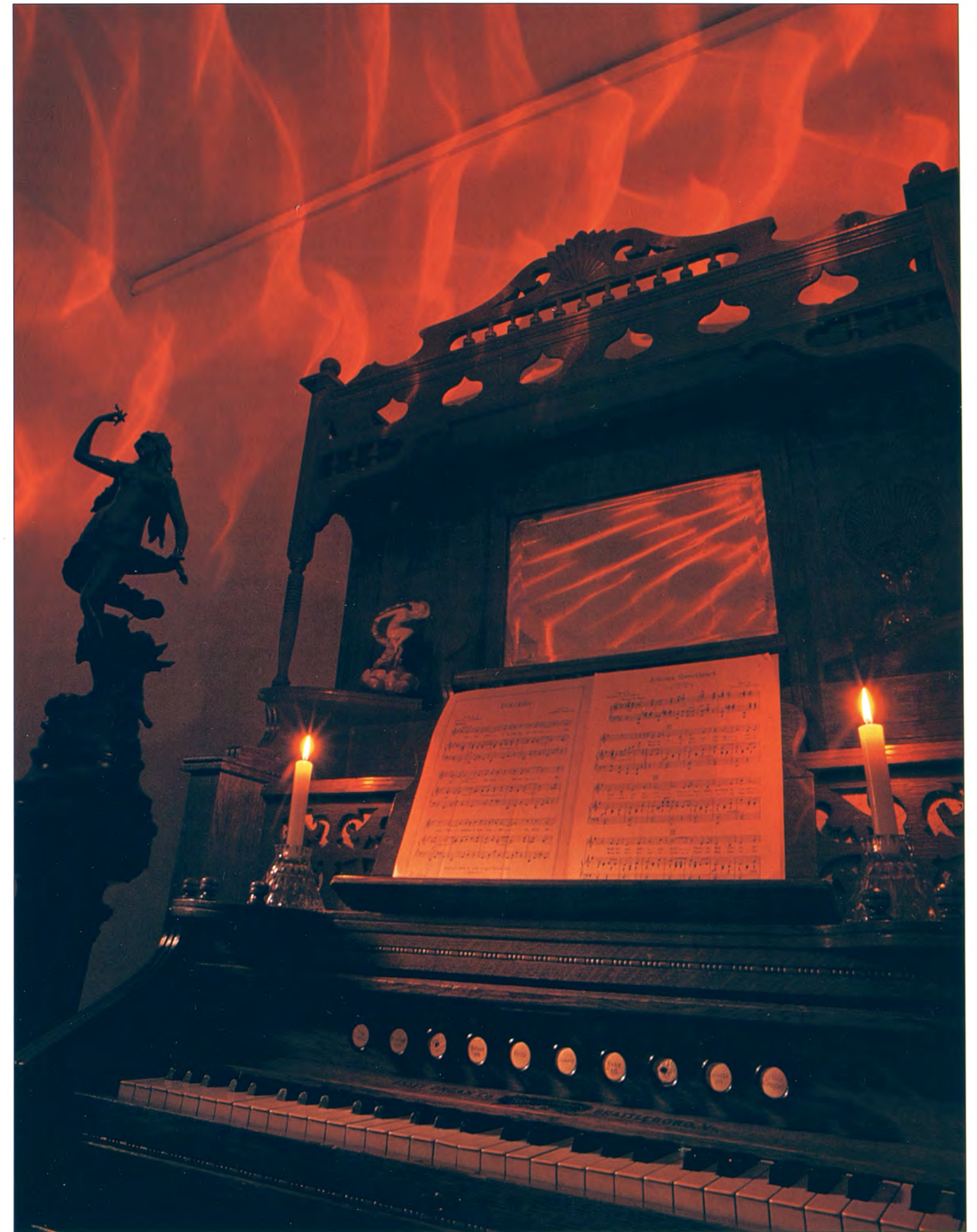
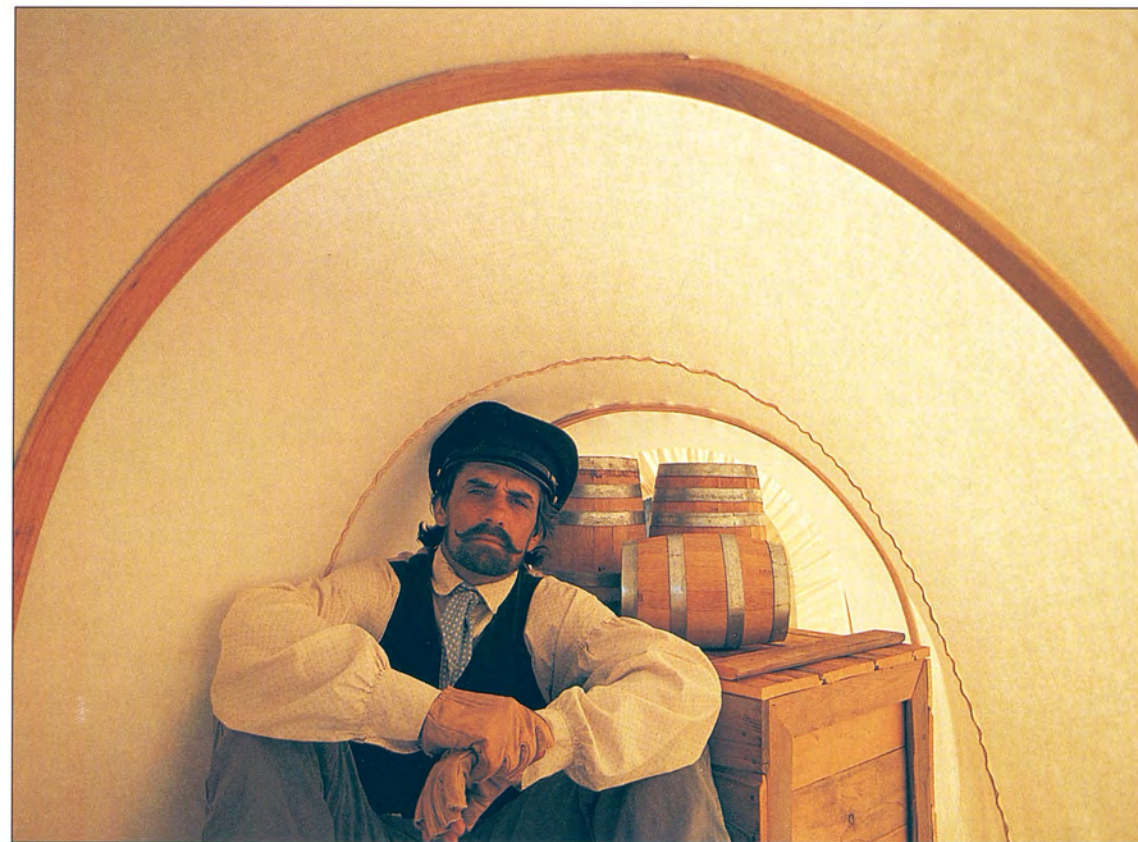
Depot to sample some of the other attractions. But I make a note to be sure to return for a guaranteed highlight, the renowned Dr. Thelonius Balthazar. More on the good doctor later.

Near the crossing, I journey on the Yuma Valley Railroad, a nonprofit, all-volunteer organization that runs regular excursions from October through May. On this day, they do something special: they use a section of track extending from Yuma Crossing west along the Colorado River into agricultural fields. The 40-minute round-trip journey is filled with passengers, including many "railfans" eager to traverse track used but once a year.

After debarking the train, I head (via a convenient and free day-long shuttle) to historic downtown Yuma and the wonderful Arizona Historical Society Century House Museum. It features extensive displays from riverboats to trains, from conquistadores to Gen. George Patton, and from mountain

(RIGHT) Seated in an outfitted covered wagon, Julian Soto portrays an 1850s' dock worker from St. Louis. Soto's character is returning to St. Louis after having fought in the war with Mexico and working in the California gold country. Yuma Crossing's historical reenactors are so immersed in their roles that it's difficult to trip them up, even when visitors forget that they are talking to someone living in a different century.

(OPPOSITE PAGE) An organ seems to be awaiting someone to play it in a room at the Century House which is decorated in the style of the 1920s. The Arizona Historical Society museum offers a fascinating look back through the days of trains and riverboats, mountain men and conquistadores.



men to elegant ladies. One room contains a whimsical look at Yuma from 1927 until after World War II, when the town was a quick-marriage mecca. Hollywood celebrities such as Tom Mix and Gloria Swanson as well as soldiers heading off to war brought their partners to Yuma to avoid California's three-day waiting period for a marriage license.

Outside the Century House is a living time line: volunteers specializing in the costumes, weaponry, memorabilia, and, most importantly, the personalities of Spanish conquistadores, American soldiers, 19th-century surveyors, photographers, even bandit Pearl Hart, herself.

Another shuttle stop takes me to the infamous Yuma Territorial Prison State Historical Park (see *Arizona Highways*, March '93). The prison is only tangentially a part of Yuma Crossing Day; in fact, a ranger informs me that attendance at the state park is not substantially affected by the celebration. Nevertheless, it certainly is well worth a visit.

Next stop is in California: the Quechan Indian Museum and historic old Fort Yuma, today the tribe's headquarters. After the Army abandoned the site, it was transferred to the Department of the Interior and then to the Quechan Indians.

Exterior alterations to the fort have made it look considerably less historic than it is. But once inside the museum, formerly the commanding officer's kitchen, one can see the building's antiquity. The walls are 26 inches thick, and one section left exposed shows the original adobe construction. The exhibits proudly recount the history of the Quechan people.

My last stop is the Quartermaster Depot to see one of its star attractions, "Miracle Medicine" salesman Dr. Thelonius Balthazar. Portrayed by Ohioan Michael Follin (who spent two years researching medicine men of the past for his re-creation), Dr. Balthazar is a glorious amalgam of every slick-talking



Jim McMullen's character is an illiterate ex-mountain man and buffalo hunter who's now working as a teamster driving wagons westward.

pitchman from P.T. Barnum to the Home Shopping Channel: "My good friends, you see before you a marvel of the medical world! A miracle of scientific discovery! Right here within this bottle is the elixir of life itself; nay, the very essence of the cosmos!"

The crowd enjoys the bantering and badgering of the doctor, who assures them their lives are about to change. To an elderly couple, Dr. Balthazar confides, "Madam, would you like a new man in your life for the small price of one dollar? Why, with one bottle I can revitalize and rejuvenate your husband! I can send you two off on a second honeymoon! Would you enjoy that?"

Why, ma'am, I do believe I see a twinkle in your eyes! . . . But I see fear in his!"

Several people stay after his quicksilver-smooth presentation and actually buy a bottle of his remarkable elixir ("formulated from an ancient Tibetan recipe"), but most are able to resist his Thelonius assault.

Leaving Dr. Balthazar, I return again to the campsite of the Emigrants. My Emigrant is in a lively discussion with a befuddled visitor who asks, "See that flagpole over there? I want to know what that doohickey is beneath it."

My time-traveler replies, looking directly at the pole, "I see no flagpole. All I see is a bank before the river."

The present-day visitor stares at him in disbelief. "Whattaya mean you don't see a flagpole? Look at the stars and stripes!"

I sidle next to the agitated tourist. "Do you know why he sees no flagpole, no stars and stripes, and no doohickey?"

The visitor pauses a moment, and a wonderful look of understanding crosses his face. "Yes! Yes! He's living in a different time!" My Emigrant smiles; I nod, and I leave the two wayfarers of the desert in a warm, animated conversation, now in different epochs but on similar wavelengths. My friend of 1850 calls to me as I leave, "Best of luck on your article for the *Arizonian*!"

**Travel Guide:** For detailed information about the great variety of places to travel in Arizona, we recommend the guidebooks *Travel Arizona* and *Travel Arizona: The Back Roads*. Our *Arizona Road Atlas*, also is necessary for travelers. To place an order, telephone toll-free 1 (800) 543-5432. In the Phoenix area or outside the U.S., call (602) 258-1000.

Philip Varney is the author of four ghost town books, including *Arizona Ghost Towns* and *Mining Camps*, an *Arizona Highways* book.

This is the sixth assignment for *Arizona Highways* that has taken Fred Griffin to the Colorado River area. He also contributed the photograph for the "Along the Way" column in this issue.

## WHEN YOU GO



Among the displays in the restored office of the quartermaster at Yuma Crossing is a Colorado riverboat compass dating from the 1880s.



## Friends Travel Adventures

### Backpack to Scenic Encounters of the Close-up Kind

Backpackers are a diverse bunch, but they agree that the best way to experience Arizona's incredibly beautiful and diverse outback is to pull on some sturdy footwear and explore it on foot.

With that in mind, the Friends of *Arizona Highways* put together five spring and early summer backpacking trips, three Scenic Tours, and two Photo Workshops.

Two trips (Scenic Tour and Photo Workshop with Jerry Sieve) take trekkers to the wild and twisting Paria Canyon, a land of 200-million-year-old sandstone arches, where ancient Indians hunted deer and bighorn sheep and left their rock art to puzzle future generations. The outings also explore the spectacular Four Corners Navajo country and Lees Ferry, a takeoff spot for Colorado River runners.

Another outing offers an unforgettable challenge: hiking the Grand Canyon from Rim to Rim, including such highlights as the landmark Phantom Ranch at the bottom of the chasm.

On another trip loaded with scenic wonders, the final destination is awe-inspiring: Rainbow Bridge, a pinkish sandstone anomaly of Nature that's the largest natural rock bridge in the world. This is a Photo Tour with Michael Collier and Rose Houk.

Rounding out the backpacking schedule is a trip to Keet Seel and Betatakin, ancient Anasazi ruins in Navajoland that hold secret as much as they reveal about the peoples who lived there. Spectacular Betatakin, built circa A.D. 1250, is a cluster of dwellings within the protective walls of a soaring domed cavern. And Keet Seel is more than worth the effort to get there: a cliff village with 160 rooms, it's the largest such community in the state.

There's adventure aplenty in Arizona's rugged hinterlands — and it all starts with that sturdy footwear.

Following are more trips.

**PHOTO WORKSHOPS**  
**Ghost Towns/Old West;** March 8-11; J. Peter Mortimer.  
**Sonoran Desert;** March 22-25; Randy Prentice.  
**Monument Valley;** April 5-8; Edward McCain and Marc Muench; September 27-30.  
**Rainbow Bridge/Navajo Mountain;** April 24-29; Rose Houk and Michael Collier.  
**Lake Powell/Slot Canyons;** May 3-6; Michael Fatali.  
**Grand Canyon River Rafting;** May 10-17; Gary Ladd.  
**Slot Canyon Backpack;** May 16-20; Jerry Sieve.

**FRIENDS SCENIC TOURS WITH CELEBRITY HOSTS**  
**Yuma;** April 5-6; Marilyn Taylor.  
**Old West Tour;** April 11-12; Bob Early.

**SCENIC TOURS WITH RAY MANLEY**  
**Arizona Spectacular;** April 16-23.

**ART TOURS/SCOTTSDALE ARTISTS' SCHOOL**  
**Canyon de Chelly;** May 3-5.  
**Grand Canyon's South Rim;** October 4-6.  
**Monument Valley;** November 7-10.

## WHEN YOU GO

The Friends of *Arizona Highways* offer a variety of ways to explore the wonders of Arizona. **Photo Workshops** led by our master contributing photographers provide picture-takers of all skill levels with hands-on instruction to help them take photos like those in the magazine. **Friends' Scenic Tours** offer the bonus of "celebrity hosts," magazine editors and writers who bring along their own special sense of fun and adventure. **Scenic Tours with Ray Manley** are organized primarily for mature adults. And amateur artists will pick up tips from the experts on **Art Tours with the Scottsdale Artists' School**.

For more information, call the Friends' Travel Office, (602) 271-5904. Assistance provided by Nikon, Hasselblad, Fuji, and Image Craft.

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## Historic Trail

One of the newest multiuse trails in the White Mountains leads to spectacular views of the scenic high country, passes near several historic structures, and — in summer and fall — provides the opportunity to spot elk and wild turkeys. “Land of the Pioneers,” an 11-mile-long trail with a short bisecting loop, wends up Ecks Mountain, east of Show Low near Vernon, and attracts hikers, horseback riders, bicyclists, and cross-country skiers. For more information, call the Forest Service, Lakeside District at (602) 368-5111 or Pinetop-Lakeside Parks and Recreation, (602) 368-6700. ■



## Necktie Party

What do Patrick Swayze, Tanya Tucker, and Mario Andretti have in common? Along with a hungry horde of other famous and regular folks, they’ve chowed down at Pinnacle Peak Patio, an unusual Western steakhouse at the foot of Pinnacle Peak in far north Scottsdale which has been having a good time with its customers for going on 38 years. What’s so unusual about the landmark eatery? Show up wearing a necktie, and you’ll find out. Others have, and more than 1 million of them, at last count, are now dangling from the restaurant’s rafters (the ties, not the customers). If you stop by for a looksee, don’t forget that polka-dot albatross the kids gave you last Father’s Day. ■

## Bridge to Yesteryear

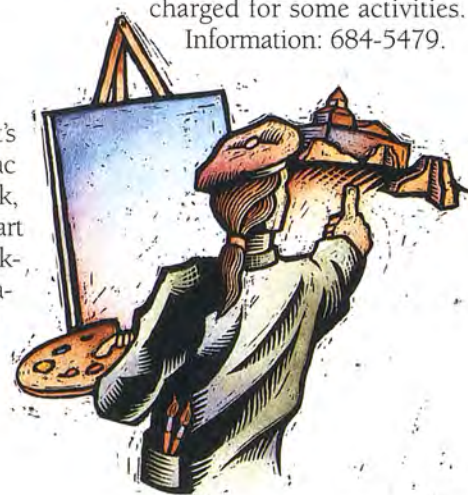
Horseback riders, hikers, and hunters heading into the Mazatzal Wilderness east of the Verde River are familiar with the Verde River Sheep Bridge. What they may not know is that the sturdy modern-day bridge (not open to vehicular traffic) offers a glimpse into Arizona history. The current span replaced a rustic wood and cable suspension bridge built during World War II by sheep ranchers using only hand tools and mules. They utilized that bridge, until it rotted out and was dismantled, to avoid fording the Verde when they moved their flocks south in winter, north in summer.

The “new” bridge is in a country that calls for a high-clearance vehicle (4WD is a good idea), about 50 miles northeast of Phoenix, above Horseshoe Lake and just east of the Bloody Basin of Tonto National Forest. You can reach the historic spot via the Bloody Basin Road Exit off Interstate 17 south of Cordes Junction (Forest Service Road 269) or northeast out of Cave Creek by way of the Seven Springs Road (FR 24). For more information, contact Cave Creek Ranger District, P.O. Box 5068, Carefree, AZ 85377; (602) 488-3441. — Joseph Stocker

## EVENTS

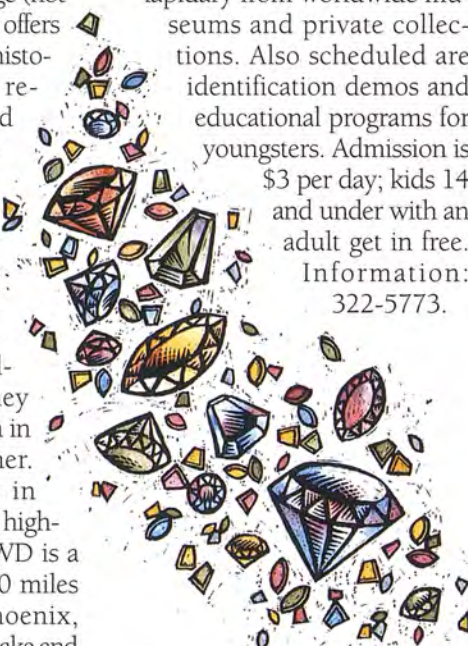
### Festival of the Arts February 4-12; Tubac

An artists’ haven that’s also the site of the Tubac Presidio State Historic Park, tiny Tubac serves up an art festival that highlights working artists’ studios and features an array of food booths with ethnic cuisines. Free admission. Information: 398-2727.



### Gem & Mineral Show February 9-12; Tucson

Topaz is the featured mineral at this year’s huge extravaganza, but there’ll also be exhibits of other mineral specimens, gems, jewelry, and lapidary from worldwide museums and private collections. Also scheduled are identification demos and educational programs for youngsters. Admission is \$3 per day; kids 14 and under with an adult get in free. Information: 322-5773.



### Gold Rush Days February 10-12; Wickenburg

This annual celebration recalls the rush for riches kicked off when Henry Wickenburg hit paydirt (the fabulous Vulture Mine) back in 1863. Today’s frontier fun includes panning for gold, a rodeo for senior pros, a carnival, gem and mineral show, Western dance, hiss-and-booo melodramas, a barbecue, parade, and enough arts and crafts booths (200) to make your wallet tremble. There’s an admission charged for some activities. Information: 684-5479.



### Lost Dutchman Days February 24-26; Apache Junction

Jacob Waltz’s legendary lost gold mine inspired this annual event which offers a bonanza of fun things to see and do in the shadow of the mysterious Superstition Mountains, including a rodeo, a Western dance, carnival, arts and crafts booths, and a parade. There will be an admission charged for the rodeo. Information: 982-3141.

### Highland Games February 25; Mesa

Maybe it was the skirl of bagpipes that drove Scotsmen to such unusual pastimes as tossing cabers (16- to 20-foot-long logs). At any rate, that’s one of the highlights of this annual Highland fling, which also features traditional dancing, pipe band competitions, a sheep-herding demonstration with Border collies, and more athletic contests. Scottish foods, 40 “clan” tents packed with information about the country’s heritage, and a concert (the prior evening) round out the offerings. Admission ranges from \$3 to \$7. Information: 431-0095. ■



Information is subject to change; telephone to confirm before planning to attend events. Unless otherwise indicated, telephone numbers are in area code 602. For a free Arizona travel kit and a calendar of events, telephone the Arizona Office of Tourism toll-free at 1 (800) 842-8257.



## Event of the Month

Text by Joseph Stocker \* Photographs by Errol Zimmerman

## The Welcome Mat Is Out at Florence, a Town with a Zesty Past

You like old things? More to the point, old and deliciously historic? Florence may be just to your taste, then, especially on the first Saturday in February. That’s when this comfy Gila Valley county-seat town of some 3,500 souls (not counting the 5,000 reluctant residents in the adjacent state penitentiary) holds its annual historic buildings tour. There are trolleys that take you from place to place, and knowledgeable guides are happy to share fascinating facts about their town. There are different places on the tour each year, but hereabouts there’s plenty to choose from.

Bear in mind that Florence is the fifth-oldest town in Arizona (after Tucson, Tubac, Yuma, and Prescott). It boasts more than 130 buildings on the National Register of Historic Places.

Florence’s origins are in agriculture, but after silver was discovered in the nearby Superstitions, the town began to resemble Tombstone, with people doing a rather substantial amount of shooting at each other. As when the sheriff and one of his deputies got into a gunfight at a local saloon. The deputy died. The sheriff survived. And in the Juan Martinez House, which was on last year’s tour, you would have seen, from that self-same saloon and shoot-out, an eight-foot mirror with a bullet hole in it. Eddie Taylor, who used to be the town’s street superintendent, owns the 115-year-old house and mirror and is supremely proud of both.

The Truman-Randall House, a Sonoran-style adobe, which gets included in the tour now and again, is another that’s evocative



(ABOVE) Visitors taking the Florence historic buildings tour gather at the chamber of commerce, the onetime Brunenkant City Bakery. (BELOW, LEFT) Billy Earley, who at 106 is not quite as old as her Florence home, chats with visitors in the John P. Clum House. (BELOW, RIGHT) Driver Tim Hatfield and tour guide Jerry Ravert regale passengers with stories about each of the stops on the tour.



of frontier rambunctiousness. Sheriff W.C. Truman built the house in the late 1880s, and a couple named Randall later acquired it. But its historic interest owes more to Sheriff Truman, for it was he who captured the notorious lady stagecoach robber, Pearl Hart. In 1899 east of Florence, she and her buddy, a guy named Joe Boot, committed what is said to have been the Southwest’s last stagecoach holdup. Sheriff Truman flushed them out of a cave and sent them scattering off to that well-known hellhole, the Yuma Prison (see *Arizona Highways*, March ’93).

The courthouse where Pearl and Joe were tried is one of three in Florence, two of which are very old and well-preserved and rate inclusion in every tour. The oldest of the three courthouses is where, on a hot August night in

1887, jailer Mike Rice took the considerable risk of giving guns to his prisoners so that together they might hold off a mob bent on lynching the miscreants. Then, more or less tractable and relieved of the weapons, they returned to their cells.

In 1891 a new courthouse was built and the old one became the county hospital, which it remained for 50 years. Not long ago, it was acquired and given to the state parks system by Ernest W. McFarland, an ex-Florentian said to be the only politician in the U.S. to serve in a state’s three highest offices: as U.S. senator, governor, and chief justice of the state Supreme Court. It’s now known as McFarland State Park.

The second-oldest courthouse is a grand Victorian-style red brick building with a phony tower clock. Its painted hands

perpetually inform onlookers that the time is 11:46 (or about 8:55 — no one knows for sure).

Florence even has a citizen older than that courthouse. She’s Billy Earley, who’s 106 but looks about 70. God gave her durable genes, she says, and she’s tried to take as good care of her body as she takes of her 126-year-old house.

Florence overall is doing much the same thing with its old buildings. John Swearingen, who has written a book about Florence titled *Good Men, Bad Men, Lawmen and a Few Rowdy Ladies*, says this is good. It means, he says, that Florence isn’t “just some little old dusty town out in the country.” And it’s not just a “prison town.” It’s a town with a zesty past, a gen-u-ine dyed-in-the-wool heritage. It’s truly one of Arizona’s historic places, and the yearly tour offers a great chance to check it out. ■

## WHEN YOU GO

Florence is 61 miles southeast of Phoenix. To get there go east on U.S. 60 to Florence Junction. Turn south onto State Route 79 and follow it until you get to Florence, 16.1 miles later. Or, for a faster trip, leave Interstate 10 at Exit 185 to reach Florence via State 387 and then State 287.

This year’s Florence Historic Home Tour will take place February 4 from 9 A.M. to 4 P.M. Tickets cost \$5 and can be obtained from the Florence Chamber of Commerce. Trolleys depart from the chamber at Eighth and Bailey streets and will visit five or six buildings, allowing you to get on and off wherever your fancy leads. For more information, contact the Florence Chamber of Commerce, P.O. Box 929, Florence, AZ 85232; (602) 868-9433.

## Here's a Tale of Mass Murder, Buried Gold, and a Lost Mission, Set in the 18th Century

Old-timers in Yuma remember stories of an era when gold was so plentiful along the banks of the lower Colorado River that people kept buckets full of nuggets under their kitchen tables. This was in the 1850s, when the California gold rush was in full swing, and the Pothole and Laguna placers north of Yuma were producing millions.

Seventy-five years earlier, while the Founding Fathers were drafting the Declaration of Independence, the Franciscan explorer-priest Francisco Garces came to the lower Colorado valley hoping to befriend and Christianize the Yuman Indians (who called themselves Quechans). He appeared to be perfectly suited for the task:

"Padre Garces is so well-fitted to get along with the Indians," wrote his fellow Franciscan Father Pedro Font, "that he appears to be but an Indian himself. He sits with them in the circle, or at night around the fire, with his legs crossed, and there he will sit musing two or three hours or more, oblivious to everything else. And although the foods of the Indians are as nasty and dirty as these outlandish people themselves, the father eats them with great gusto and says that they are good for the stomach and very fine. In short, God has created him, as I see it, solely for the purpose of seeking out these unhappy, ignorant, and rustic people."

These "outlandish people" seemed open to the idea of

having a mission in their territory. One of their leaders, Salvador Palma, was eager enough that he traveled all the way to Mexico City with Juan Bautista de Anza to request that the mission be built. While there he was baptized in the cathedral, and then he met with Viceroy Antonio Bucareli, who presented him with various gifts.

But in July of 1781, only eight months after the Franciscans established two missions north of Yuma, the Quechans killed Garces and 50 other Spaniards in what came to be known as the Yuma Massacre. The Indians also burned the two missions, San Pedro y San Pablo de Bicuner and Puerto de la Purisima Concepcion. It was a tragic event in the history of the Franciscan Order (four missionaries died)

and marked the end of Spain's efforts to settle the lower Colorado valley.

The accepted and well-documented version of the events leading to the massacre involves political blundering on the part of the Spaniards and a severe misreading of the Quechans' attitude about being "civilized." There is another story, however, unlikely yet persistent, that attributes the uprising to the Spaniards' hunger for gold.

A hundred years after the massacre, the Franciscan historian Father Zephyrin Engelhardt

came to Yuma to find the remains of Bicuner Mission. On horseback he and an old Indian guide rode north from Yuma, crossing the Colorado onto the California side of the border. The guide led him to some crumbling adobe ruins (later demolished during the construction of the All-American Canal). This was where the mission had been, the old Indian told Engelhardt. This was where Mexicans had

later come in search of the Franciscans' buried gold.

Engelhardt had never heard anything about gold in the area, and he quickly dismissed the notion that the missionaries were in the mining business. Later historians also have scoffed at the legend, but it has lasted nonetheless for 200 years, fueled by the fact that Bicuner Mission was built on ground that later proved to be rich in gold.

According to the legend, the Spaniards living at Bicuner used the Indians as cheap labor in their placer mining operations, providing a plate of beans for a plate of gold, according to one source. The Indians eventually rebelled, and after the massacre they took the gold from the mission and carried it across the river into Arizona, where they held a powwow near the base of Sugarloaf Peak in the Laguna Mountains. According to one version of the legend, they then buried the gold in the desert and left no clues as to its location; another tale asserts that they threw it in the river. A third version, recounted in 1955 by a prospector named Shorty Mills, holds that the Indians sewed up the gold in a cowhide and buried it under the mission.

Over the years, a number of people have searched for the lost gold of Bicuner. In 1836, Thomas Russell, a slope-shouldered, one-eyed prospector from San Diego tried to find it without luck. For his trouble, he was thrown into jail by Mexican officials who thought he knew more than he was saying about the gold they claimed for the national treasury. There are stories of various other searchers, including three priests from Italy who arrived in Yuma in 1898 with a map of the region made in Paris. By this time the remains of the church had disintegrated to the point of being unrecognizable, and its exact location was in dispute (for years, historians believed the mission had been downstream from Yuma near Pilot Knob; but it is now generally accepted that it was upstream, near the present location of Laguna Dam).

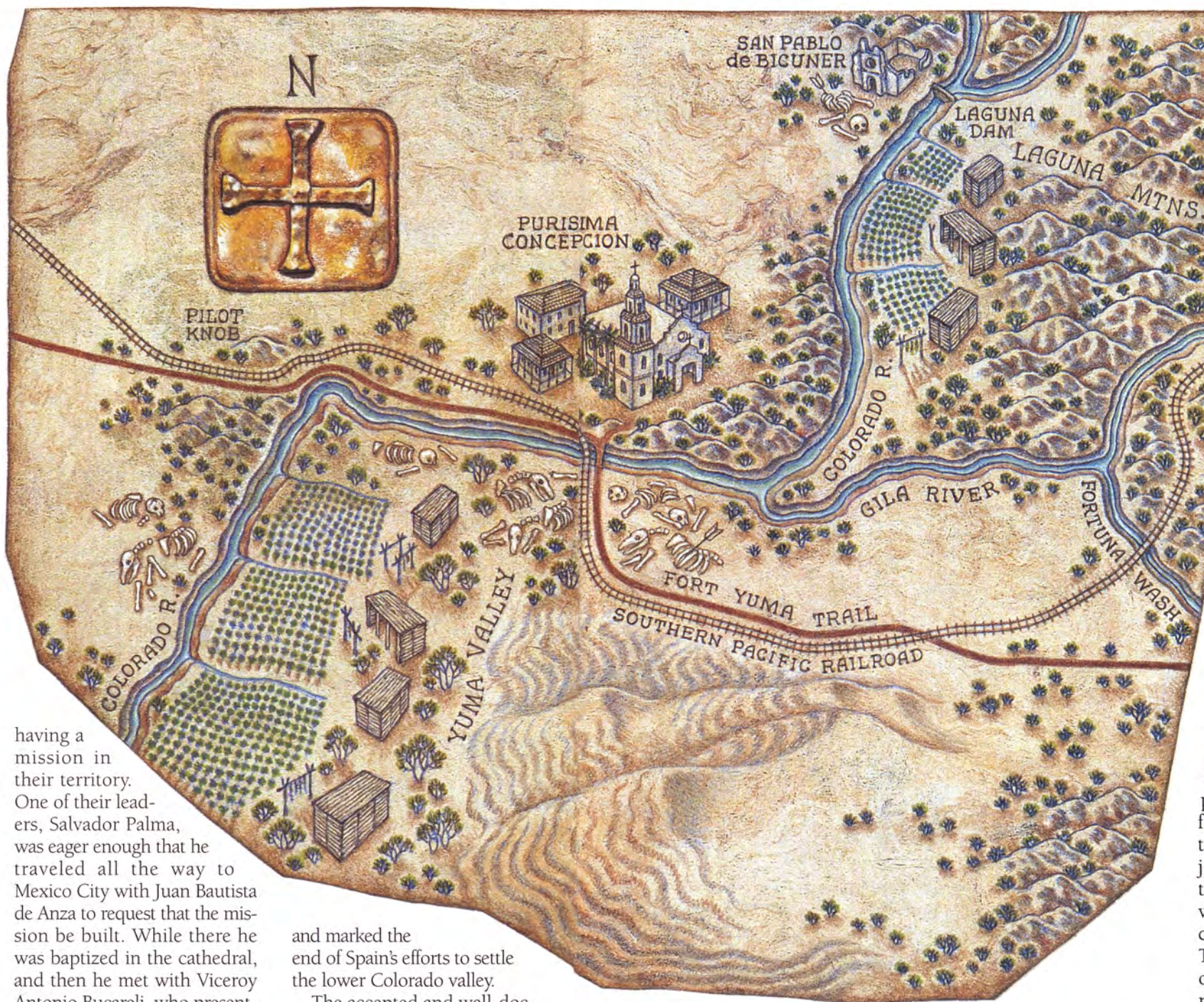
Did the Franciscans find gold

at Bicuner Mission? In 1746, after a foray to the same region where Bicuner was later built, the Jesuit priest Jacobo Sedelmayr wrote, "Although there are no known mines on the Gila and Colorado rivers, there is no lack of hopes and possibilities of their existence." And in 1775, Garces mentioned in his diary that his interpreter believed the land to be rich in gold. It seems possible that the Franciscans were at least aware of the existence of gold, whether or not they actively mined it.

Still, most accounts of the Yuma Massacre attribute the uprising to less alluring causes. The Spanish settlers appropriated the best land for their homes and then allowed their livestock to graze in the Quechans' crops. Gifts promised to the Indians failed to materialize. Unruly Quechans were locked up or whipped, and since punishment was the province of the military, the Franciscans had little say in the matter.

The decision to establish a mission-pueblo at Yuma was made far away, but those familiar with the Quechans could foresee trouble. Before the missions were built, Gen. Juan Bautista de Anza warned Viceroy Bucareli in a letter that if the Quechans were treated severely they might revolt.

The bad news for would-be treasure hunters is that even if the Franciscans had amassed a trove of gold, there is no telling where it might be now. There are no treasure maps, no clues left by the Indians, no markers guiding the way. The Colorado River once ran high enough through Yuma that steamships could come up from the Sea of Cortes; now it won't float much more than a canoe. Bicuner Mission has eroded into hard ground. Likewise, the legend of the Bicuner Gold, once large in the mind of prospectors, has faded into the past. ■



# A rizona Humor

## Dry Longing

Sometimes it's hard for visitors to Arizona to realize that our dry riverbeds ever have water in them. But occasionally this regional skepticism goes the other way.

There was the time when a Tucson native journeyed to New York. After a few days, his host asked him how he liked the Hudson River.

"I don't know," said the Tucsonan. "Your dang river has been so full of water the whole time I've been here I haven't been able to get a good look at it."

Gary Every  
Tucson

## A Special Meal

The old bachelor who lived on a homestead that joined our ranch in Cochise County was a good neighbor — friendly as a spotted pup — but as filthy in his housekeeping as he was sociable.

Once I happened to be riding by his place around noon, and he called to me to join him for lunch. Glancing around his cabin, I made excuses for needing to hurry along.

He obviously read my thoughts and told me quickly not to worry about whether his dishes were clean. He said they were as clean as soap and two waters could get them.

So, with that assurance, I relaxed and joined him for frijoles and bacon.

Then, as I arose to leave, he picked up the plates, put them on the floor, and went to the door to call his dogs. "Soap, Two Waters, come clean up these plates."

Clell Chambers  
Willcox

## A Real Butcher

My mother was born in the Huachuca Mountains long before Arizona became a state. She occasionally commuted by horse-drawn wagon to Bisbee 35 miles away to shop or see a doctor.

After she grew up, she moved to Bisbee and married a miner.

Complaining of a sore throat one day, she went to the mining company's doctor. During the examination he commented that whoever had taken out her tonsils was a real butcher. He asked my mother who had done it.

"Why you did, doctor," she replied. "You did."

Ted Farrell  
Escondido, CA

## Friendly Visit

When I, a widow, visited my brother in Tucson last summer he took me to a friend's ranch.

There I met an attractive, unattached cowboy and told him he looked like my third husband.

He asked me how many times I had been married, and I replied, "Twice."

Mrs. L. Waters Sheriff  
Norfolk, VA

## Early Arrival

A gas company crew laying pipe near Casa Grande had completed putting up a barricade of signs, lights, and cones to mark a trench that would remain open overnight.

Suddenly, a car full of passengers came barreling through, knocking down the barricade and plunging into the ditch.

My son, the crew supervisor, ran over, opened the car door, and inquired, "Is everyone here all right?"

A voice from within answered, "I don't know. I just got here myself."

Lovel L. Rogers  
Mesa

## Bovine Puzzle

Many years ago, my wife, our seven-year-old son, and I were traveling on old Route 66 when we stopped at a northern Arizona restaurant with a decidedly Western decor.

As soon as we were seated, our son headed for the rest room, but returned almost immediately and whispered, "Dad, am I a bull or a heifer?"

Harold Smith  
Ridgecrest, CA

## Modern Mother Goose

At a Scottsdale preschool, a three-year-old child and I were saying Mother Goose rhymes together. At one point she stopped to correct my version with, "No, that's not the way it goes. It's, 'This little piggy when to Target.'"

Helen K. Jones  
Scottsdale

## Learning Ecology

A group of us were discussing the lumber industry and the environment. Our daughter, who likes to keep her children informed about current events, asked her six-year-old son, Coby, if he understood what we were talking about.

"Oh, yes," he said. "They had to quit cutting down trees because they spotted an owl."

Doreene McCoy  
Concho

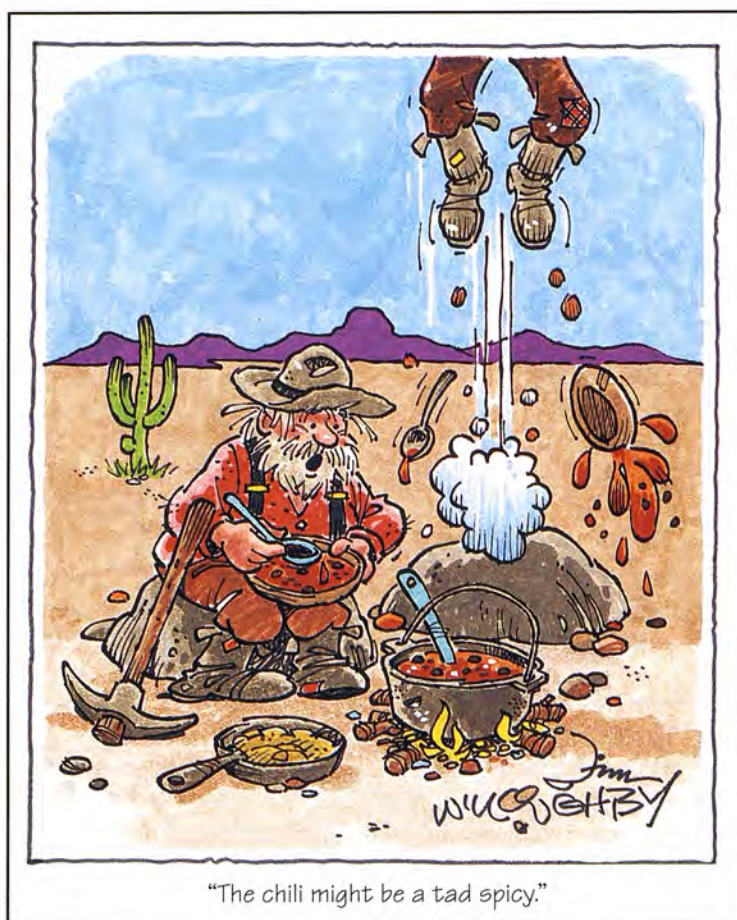
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We'll notify those whose stories we intend to publish, but we cannot acknowledge or return unused submissions.



JIM WILLOUGHBY

# B oadside Rest

## The Rim Country Rejoiced with Payson Dew When the U.S. Went Dry

Promulgated by a Constitutional amendment and a Congressional act, on January 16, 1920, the United States of America went dry.

On the same day, more or less, a piece of Arizona the size of Connecticut, home of about 1,000 settlers, went wet.

In all that remote country below the Mogollon Rim, mainly forested and mountainous, the largest community was a frontier ranch that had begun as Green Valley and grown to a few hundred souls drawing their mail from a post office named Payson. In an economy tied to burro-powered prospecting and shirttail ranching, the barter system prevailed. Doc delivered a baby for a calf. The wagon freighter took apples for his fee. The general store kept a book of credit. A rare five dollar gold piece would rattle around town like a dry bean in a Mason jar.

Then Prohibition arrived. Moral questions aside, it was a Rim Country godsend. Out in the hill-and-holler hideouts where water flowed in a trickle or a torrent, folks revived the age-old arts of fermentation, distillation, and mellowing. Corn whiskey. White lightning. Moonshine. Payson Dew.

"In the speakeasies of Los Angeles, they didn't know where Payson was," recalls one rimrock old-timer. "But they sure knew Payson Dew." They knew Payson Dew in Phoenix, Albuquerque, and Tucson, too.

Elsewhere, in places like Chicago, it is said that Prohibition turned ugly in police corruption and gang violence. But Payson's participation in the circumvention of the Volstead Act was more of a game with a welcome payoff. Our old-timer again: "This country always was cash poor, and makin' bootleg likker put sorely needed money in a lot of ol' boys' pockets."

When I was young in the 1950s with the legs of a half-miler, it seemed that in any far-off corner I could hike, where rain or snowmelt fed a little spring, I could count on three things: tracks of big game like elk and bear and lesser creatures, plenty of watercress and other greens to freshen a backpack supper, and nearby, the archaeological remains — soldered vats, earthenware shards, copper tubing — of a moonshine still.

Even then this neck of woods was not far removed from its pioneer past. The first man buried in Payson's cemetery in the early 1880s was slain by warring Apaches. And two generations later, the hamlet remained a grueling

five- to six-hour drive over dirt roads to the bright lights.

Near to the spring would be mouldering a pile of unpainted rough-sawn lumber marking an abandoned homestead cabin, and maybe a crumbling stone livestock pen. If not a flowing spring, then a hand-dug well.

Whiskey begins with a mash of grain softened in water. And a local saying averred: "No water is better than what comes from a hand-dug well." Much is made in movies of gunfighters, but who had more courage than a man alone, digging with pick and shovel a pit down 35, 45, 55 feet, as all the while the circle of light above him grew ever smaller? One collapse of a sidewall, a man could have excavated his own grave.

That was only the beginning. The adjacent opening, today a flower-strewn meadow, once bore a stand of ancient pines, some saplings when Pilgrims sailed. Each tree must be felled. Its bole bucked out and dragged off. The stump removed. The earth plowed and planted. To corn.

To this day, by federal law, for a whiskey to be labeled bourbon, the only truly American liquor, its mash must have

contained at least 51 percent corn. Two years of aging in charred oak barrels are likewise required. But when The Rim went to moonshining, just about anything starchy or sweet, be it potato or peach, filled the vat. And age was measured in minutes.

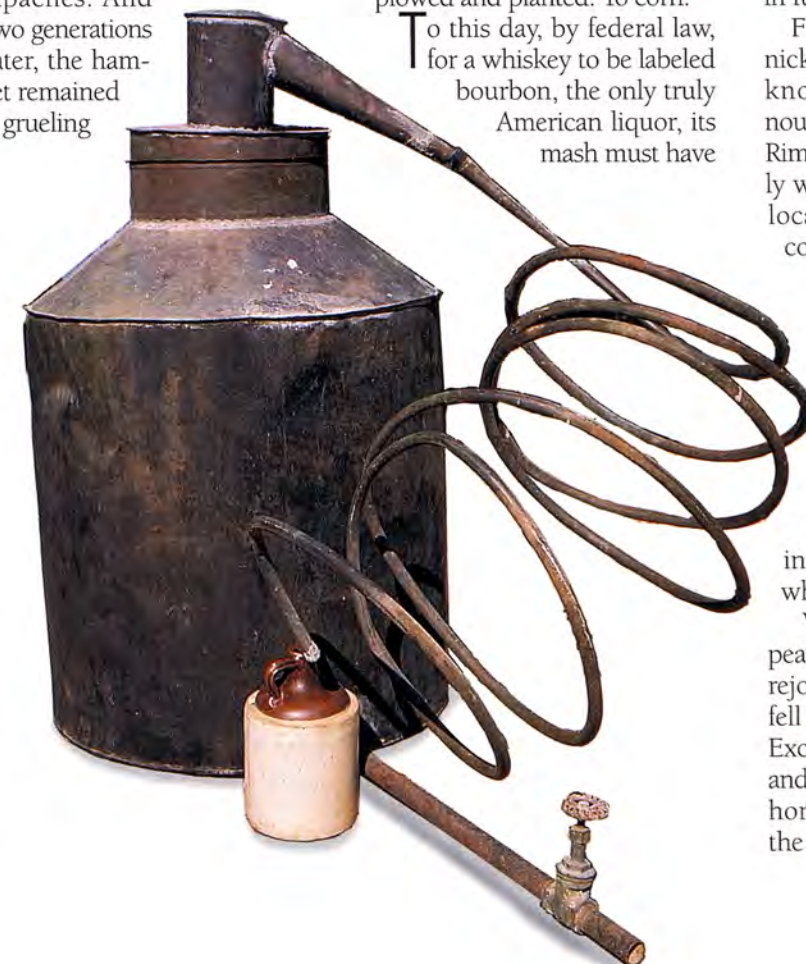
Anecdotes abound. One grizzled chemist died of lead poisoning after sampling his own brew. Another moonshiner charged asthma sufferers 25 cents to sniff the vapors emanating from his bubbling mash. Worked wonders. But good, bad or lethal, Payson Dew retailed for about \$5 a gallon.

An operation of any size required tons of ingredients and fuel. Ira A. Murphy tells us in his *Brief History of Payson, Arizona*: "The best estimates refer to a minimum of 20 bootleggers on any given day . . . One still, on the East Verde, was of such size that large wooden vats were made to handle the mash; another used a steam compressor that utilized a wagon load of wood each day to keep the still in full operation."

Federal agents, elsewhere nicknamed "revenooers," were known as "prohies" (pronounced PRO-highs) along The Rim. A stool pigeon occasionally would tip the law to a still's location, but Payson had its counterintelligence network.

Whenever a raid was planned, a secret prohi ally would telephone a Payson relative and announce that a fishing trip was in order. As the alarm spread, one moonshine ranch turned loose a herd of belled donkeys to flee into the forest and warn the whiskey makers.

When Prohibition was repealed in late 1933, the nation rejoiced. But the Rim Country fell into a season of mourning. Except for a batch run off now and then for old times' sake and home consumption, it meant the end of Payson Dew. ■



(RIGHT) This old still, displayed in Payson's Museum of the Forest, reminded author Don Dedera of the days when moonshining was a thriving cottage industry in the area.



## Back Road Adventure

Text by Douglas Kreutz \* Photographs by Randy Prentice

### They Say Greaterville Road Exists in a Little Pocket of Paradise

Driving the Greaterville Road, I daydreamed of buying a ranch in the pastoral heart of the area and devoting my life to raising cattle.

If the ranch idea didn't come about, perhaps I could get a job patrolling the magnificent rolling grasslands and rocky canyons for a government land management agency.

Failing that, I might launch a new career as a field botanist, specializing in research on the lush high-desert vegetation that decorates the roadside landscape in every direction.

I grasped whimsically at these straws as I searched my cerebrum for an occupation — any occupation — that would permit me to spend a lot of time in

this little pocket of paradise 35 miles southeast of Tucson.

Alas, my reverie failed to concoct a scheme for transplanting my daily life from the city to these beckoning rural reaches. But I was certain I wasn't the first visitor to toy with the idea.

The Greaterville Road, a well-maintained route extending 13.7 miles along the northern flanks of the Santa Rita Mountains, is one of those Arizona byways that ought to be posted with warning signs: Caution: Area May Be Addictive.

Photographer Randy Prentice, with whom I traveled the road one cool day, had warned me of the route's charms.

"It winds through a little of everything: rangeland with high grasses and wildflowers, hills, some canyons, and a gorge with big cottonwood trees," Randy said before we departed Tucson. "The road goes through a low pass in the Santa Ritas, and you can see the higher ridges of the range as you drive along. Beautiful country!"

Randy added that the area also is known for its rich mining

history, its active ranches, and the townsite of Greaterville — the all-but-vanished little community for which the road was named.

Clocking our mileage from the Speedway Boulevard entrance to Interstate 10 in Tucson, we had driven east on Interstate 10 to its junction with I-19. We headed south on I-19, passing Green Valley and taking the Continental Exit (Exit 63) just as the odometer showed we had traveled 26 miles from our starting point. At the bottom of the exit ramp, we turned left, proceeded to the Continental directional sign, and turned right.

We drove southeast on the Continental Road 8.7 miles to its junction with the Greaterville Road, which is unpaved for most of its length but suitable for passenger cars.

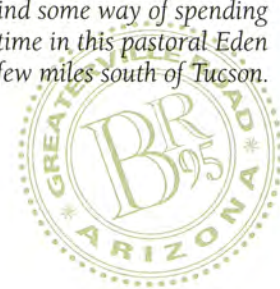
Then, after turning left off Continental Road onto the Greaterville Road, we rumbled along, marveling at the sights and, in my case, fantasizing about making them a part of everyday life.

The first miles of the road,



(RIGHT) Ocotillos and wildflowers cover a hillside in Box Canyon, a deep gorge that appears unexpectedly beyond the miles of gently rolling range that mark the beginning of Greaterville Road, a well-maintained route along the northern edge of the Santa Rita Mountains.

(FAR RIGHT) The scenic splendor that continues into Sycamore Canyon further entices author Douglas Kreutz to find some way of spending more time in this pastoral Eden just a few miles south of Tucson.





which connects the Continental Road with State Route 83 to the east, took us across an expanse of 4,000-foot-high rangeland that demanded a Sons of the Pioneers soundtrack.

Range grasses, some of them growing 18 inches high, and clusters of yellow daisies played foreground to a horizon dominated by the 9,000-foot heights of the Santa Rita Mountains to the south.

Linking the grassy flats and pine-topped highlands were hillside gardens of ocotillos, their long green tendrils washed clean by recent showers.

Randy, of course, wanted frequent stops to commune photographically with the countryside. While he unloaded his arsenal of cameras, lenses, and tripods, I waded through a sea of knee-high grass and savored the striking silence. I heard no voices, no distant rumble of traffic, not even a rustle of breeze in the clumps of mesquite dotting the range.

We drove on slowly, noticing that the “rangeland atmosphere” dominates for roughly the first third of the road’s length. Signs for the still-operating Santa Rita Ranch and Singing Valley Ranch, as well as adobe ruins from

bygone days, stand as testimony that some lucky souls have, in fact, found a way to mix business with the pleasure of living in such surroundings.

Happily for those who like their back road adventures spiced with variety, the gently rolling range gradually gives way to mountain-and-canyon terrain as the route approaches a deep-cut gorge known as Box Canyon.

Here, in the Santa Rita foothills, groves of gnarled oak trees and tall solitary agaves climb the 5,000-foot-high hillsides.

Wildflowers here, such as

scarlet penstemon, hold their color well into autumn along dry watercourses in the canyon bottoms.

Steep rock walls flank the road in the narrowest part of Box Canyon, an area that attracted miners prospecting for copper and other metals more than a century ago.

Helvetia, a long-defunct community about six miles north of the Greaterville Road, was one of the area’s mining centers in the 1890s and early 1900s. But in 1911, plummeting copper prices put it on the fast track to ghost town status.



(FAR LEFT AND LEFT) Sunny goldeneye, spiky agave, and prickly pear are among the myriad plants and wildflowers that assault the senses along Greaterville Road, an unpaved track for most of its length but still offering an easy ride for the family sedan. The Santa Ritas, which rise to 9,000 feet, are one of the handful of mountain ranges that ring Tucson.



Greaterville, another onetime mining town, is 1.8 miles south on a spur road that departs the Greaterville Road three miles west of State Route 83. But be aware that little remains at the townsite, which is on private land and isn’t open to the public.

If you have the time for a side excursion, just before the private property gate, head for a hill off to the left with a dirt track leading to a small cemetery with markers dating from the 1890s.

After pausing in Box Canyon to scramble up a dry waterfall, and to admire huge cottonwood trees, we drove out of the canyon’s confines into a more expansive landscape to the east.

The final three miles of the road to its junction with State 83 are paved, serving subtle notice that the back road solitude must eventually give way to two-lane highway traffic.

On a subsequent visit to the Greaterville Road, I opted to make

the trip a loop route by returning to Tucson by way of State Route 83. This entailed driving 19 miles north on 83 to its junction with I-10 and then traveling west on the interstate 21 miles back to the city.

Randy and I, however, chose to top off our Greaterville day by reversing our route over the road and taking in the scenery “backward.”

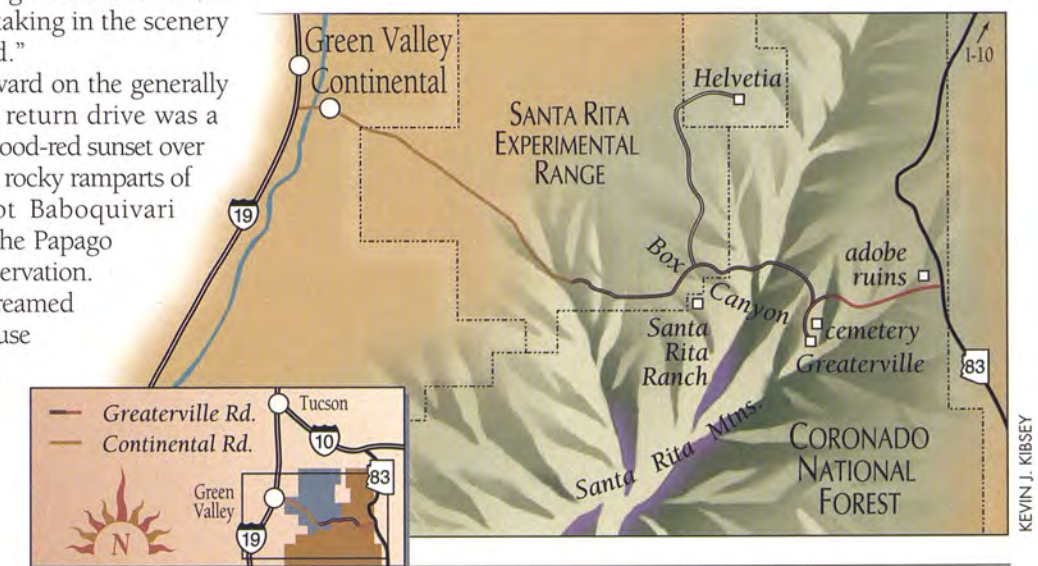
Our reward on the generally westward return drive was a dazzling blood-red sunset over the distant rocky ramparts of 7,734-foot Baboquivari Peak, on the Papago Indian Reservation.

I had dreamed up no excuse for living in these parts, but I knew I’d be back to visit. ■

## TIPS FOR TRAVELERS

Back road travel can be hazardous if you are not prepared for the unexpected. Whether traveling in the desert or in the high country, be aware of weather and road conditions, and make sure you and your vehicle are in top shape and you have plenty of water.

Don’t travel alone, and let someone at home know where you’re going and when you plan to return.





## Hike of the Month

### All Day You've Paced the Barren Waste ... Now It's Time for a Clear Cool Dip

It's the end of a long, sweaty hike. You've just scrambled down a steep embankment to a small pool below a boulder-choked



narrows. Dropping your pack, you yank off your hot boots and socks and dangle your feet in swirling water. Next off is your sweat-soaked T-shirt. Then, standing in calf-deep water, step out of your shorts, a leg at a time. Hold your breath now, and slide, oh, so slowly, off the edge of a slick boulder, feet, legs, torso, until you're submerged to your nose in cool mountain water. It's deliciously refreshing. Your wild, joyous shouts echo off canyon walls.

Can you blame a hiker for being a bit cryptic about where his favorite swimmin' holes are? I found mine the hard way by poring over topo map contour lines, searching out places where water drops fast, likely spots for deeper pools. And I swore to secrecy everyone I told. Part of the pleasure is knowing that I'm alone, private, uninhibited.

That's kind of the way it used to be up at Miner's Pool on Sabino Creek in Tucson's Santa Catalina Mountains. Now I almost always encounter other hikers there. Since it's no longer a secret, I guess it's okay to divulge its location to the world.

You can hike there or ride part way. On foot the way is the Phone Line Trail that starts in the Lower Sabino Canyon Recreation Area and winds along the east

canyon wall for 3.8 miles to intersect the Sabino Canyon Trail. From there Miner's Pool is less than a mile.

The easier way is to buy a \$5 shuttle ticket and ride 3.9 miles up the paved road, crossing the creek several times on a series of stone bridges. At the end of the road you hike a half-mile up a switchback trail to the Sabino Canyon Trail.

From there the descent into Miner's Pool is .7 of a mile, a distance that will take about 15 minutes depending on your pace. Gradually Sabino Canyon Trail moves closer to the canyon, where, far down to your left, you'll glimpse quicksilver flashes of running water.

After a half-mile, a large cone-shaped rock outcrop comes into view on the creek side of the trail. As you approach this towering cone, look for an unmarked trail that drops off Sabino Canyon Trail toward the creek just below the granite outcrop. At this point, a walking stick, a kind of third leg, will be handy. The distance to the creek is about 200 yards, but the trail is very steep and the footing loose, even washed out, in places. A slow, cautious descent will take 10 minutes.

At the creek, you will have to boulder-hop another

(LEFT) Nowadays author Tom Dollar almost always runs into other hikers at Miner's Pool in Sabino Canyon. If he's observant and lucky, he also spots wildlife, such as a Western spadefoot toad. (RIGHT) Walking all the way to the pool can be strenuous in spots, but a \$5 tram ride can take you to within a half-mile of the Sabino Canyon Trail.

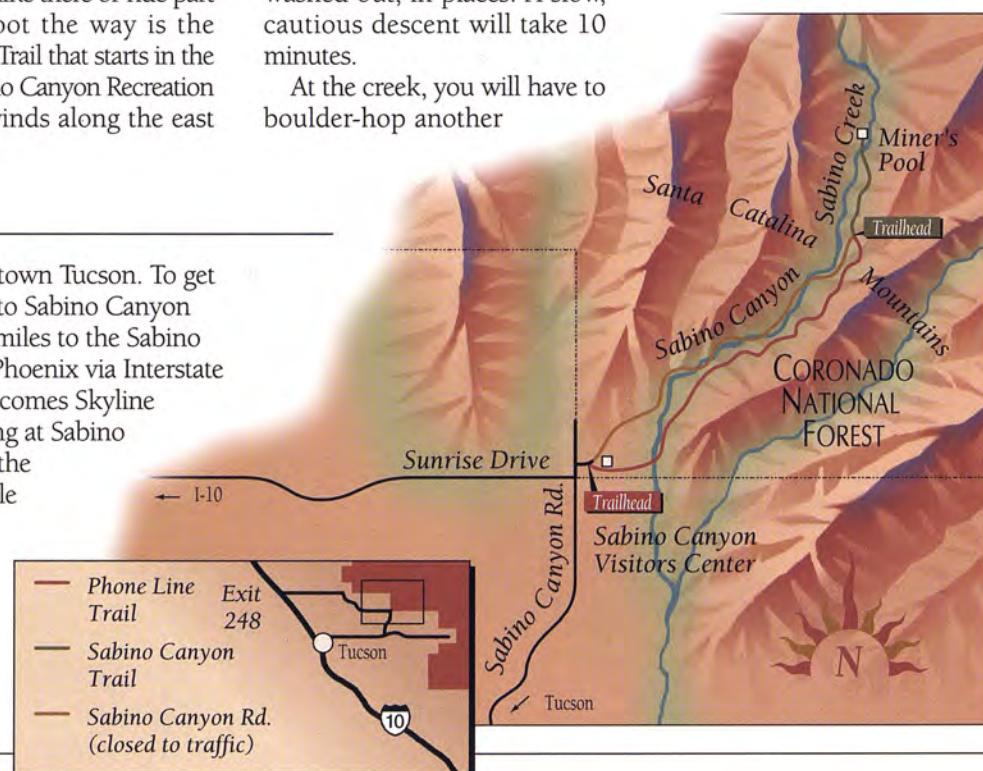
50 yards downstream to Miner's Pool. Again, caution is the word. Wet rocks are slippery.

Entering the pool is easy: you jump. Getting out is tougher. You have to scramble atop a boulder and hoist yourself hand over hand on a rope left behind by other swimmers. Bring a partner. You may need help, and it's safer.

The last time I swam Miner's Pool was late November, the day before Thanksgiving. The weather was unusually warm, the water cold, so I immersed in a smaller pool upstream to steel myself for the plunge into deeper water. Ah, it was lovely. ☑

### WHEN YOU GO

Sabino Canyon is 13 miles northeast of downtown Tucson. To get there from Tucson, take Tanque Verde Road to Sabino Canyon Road, turn north onto Sabino and proceed 4.5 miles to the Sabino Canyon Recreation Area Visitors Center. From Phoenix via Interstate 10, take the Ina Road Exit and head east. Ina becomes Skyline Drive, which becomes Sunrise Drive, deadending at Sabino Canyon Road, where a short left takes you into the Visitors Center parking lot. Tickets for the shuttle buses to Sabino and Bear canyons can be purchased at a booth near the visitors center. For more information on Miner's Pool and hiking in Sabino Canyon, contact the Coronado National Forest's Santa Catalina Ranger District, 5700 N. Sabino Canyon Road, Tucson, AZ 85715; (602) 749-8700.



KEVIN J. KIBSEY



